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TRAITS

OF

AMERICAN HUMOUR.

BY NATIVE AUTHORS.

EDITED AND ADAPTED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK,"

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TRAITS

OF

AMERICAN HUMOUR.

I.

THE EDITOR'S CREED.

He takes up the crook, not that the sheep may be fed, but that he may never want a warm woollen suit and a joint of mutton.

For which reason I would derive the name *editor* not so much from *edo,* to publish, as from *edo,* to eat, that being the peculiar profession to which he esteems himself called. He blows up the flames of political discord for no other occasion than that he may thereby handily boil his own pot. I believe

there are two thousand of these mutton-loving shepherds in the United States, and of these, how many have even the dimmest perception of their immense power, and the duties consequent thereon? Here and there, haply, one. Nine hundred and ninety-nine labour to impress upon the people the great principles of *Tweedledum*, and other nine hundred and ninety-nine preach with equal earnestness the doctrines according to *Tweedledee*.

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur away ez Paris is;
I love to see her stick her claws
In them infarnal Pharisees;
It's wal enough agin a king
To dror resolves an' triggers,—
But libbaty's a kind o' thing
That don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want
A tax on teas an' coffees,
Thet nothin' aint extravygunt,—
Purvidin' I'm in office;

Fer I hev loved my country sence
  My eye-teeth filled their sockets,
An' Uncle Sam I reverence,
  Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in *any* plan
  O' levyin' the taxes,
Ez long ez, like a lumberman,
  I git jest wut I axes:
I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,
  Because it kind o' rouses
The folks to vote,—an' keeps us in
  Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it's wise an' good
  To sen' out furrin missions,
Thet is, on sartin understood
  An' orthydox conditions;—
I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,
  Nine thousan' more fer outfit,
An' me to recommend a man
  The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways
O' prayin' an' convartin';
The bread comes back in many days,
An' buttered, tu, fer sartin;—
I mean in preyin' till one busts
On wut the party chooses,
An' in convartin' public trusts
To very privit uses.

I du believe hard coin the stuff
Fer 'lectioneers to spout on;
The people's ollers soft enough
To make hard money out on;
Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,
An' gives a good-sized junk to all,—
I don't care *how* hard money is,
Ez long ez mine 's paid punctooal.

I du believe with all my soul
In the gret Press's freedom,
To pint the people to the goal
An' in the traces lead 'em;

Palsied the arm thet forges yokes
  At my fat contracts squintin',
An' withered be the nose thet pokes
  Inter the gov'ment printin'!

I du believe thet I should give
  Wut 's his'n unto Cæsar,
Fer it's by him I move an' live,
  Frum him my bread an' cheese air;
I du believe thet all o' me
  Doth bear his souperscription,—
Will, conscience, honour, honesty,
  An' things o' thet description.

I du believe in prayer an' praise
  To him thet hez the grantin'
O' jobs,—in everythin' thet pays,
  But most of all in CANTIN';
This doth my cup with marcies fill,
  This lays all thought o' sin to rest,—
I *don't* believe in princerple,
  But, O, I *du* in interest.

I du believe in bein' this
Or thet, ez it may happen
One way or t'other hendiest is
To ketch the people nappin';
It aint by princerples nor men
My preudunt course is steadied,—
I scent wich pays the best, an' then
Go into it baldheaded.

I du believe thet holdin' slaves
Comes nat'ral tu a Presidunt,
Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves
To hev a wal-broke precedunt;
Fer any office, small or gret,
I couldn't ax with no face,
Without I'd ben, thru dry an' wet,
Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash
'll keep the people in blindness,—
That we the Mexicuns can thrash
Right inter brotherly kindness,

Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball
  Air good-will's strongest magnets,
Thet peace, to make it stick at all,
  Must be druv in with bagnets.

In short, I firmly du believe
  In Humbug generally,
Fer it's a thing thet I perceive
  To hev a solid vally;
This heth my faithful leader ben,
  To browsing sweet heth led me,
An' this 'll keep the people green
  To feed ez they hev fed me.

II.

JOSH BEANPOLE'S COURTSHIP.

"MOTHER!" exclaimed Josh Beanpole, "Mother, I say, I feel all over in a twitteration like. Huh! huh! Who'd have thought it?"

"What ails ye, Josh?" asked the old woman, stopping her spinning-wheel at this exclamation. "What bug has bit you now?"

"Can't tell," said Josh, in a drooping, dolorous tone, and hanging his head as if he had been caught stealing a sheep.

"Can't tell?" said Mrs. Beanpole, turning quite round, and giving Josh a wondering stare. "Can't tell? what does the critter mean?"

"Who'd ha' thought it?" repeated Josh, fumbling in his pockets, twisting round his head and rolling up his eyes in a fashion most immensely sheepish.—"Hannah Downer's courted!"

Here Josh shuffled himself awkwardly into the settle in the chimney corner, and sunk upon one side, fixing his eyes with a most ludicro-dismal squint upon the lower extremity of a pot-hook that hung at the end of the crane.

"Courted!" exclaimed Mrs. Beanpole, not exactly comprehending the state of her son's intellectuals. "Well—what's all that when it's fried?"

"Arter so many pails of water as I've pumped for her," said Josh in a dismal whine,—"for to go for to let herself to be courted by another feller!"

"Here's a to-do!" ejaculated the old woman.

"It's tarnation all over!" said Josh, beginning a bolder tone as he found his mother coming to an understanding of the matter. "It makes me crawl all over to think on't. Didn't I wait on her three times to singing school? Hadn't I e'en a most made up my mind to break the ice, and tell her I shouldn't wonder if I had a sneakin' notion arter

somebody's Hannah? I should ha' been reg'lar courting in less than a month—and Peet Spinbutton has cut me out—as slick as a whistle!"

"Peet Spinbutton!" said the old woman, "well, I want to know!"

"Darn his eyes!" exclaimed Josh.

"Peet Spinbutton!" repeated Mrs. Beanpole; "what, the ensign of the Dogtown Blues? that great lummokin' feller!"

"Darn him to darnation!" exclaimed Josh, catching hold of the toast-iron as if he meant to lay about him, "to cut in afore me in that ere sort o' way!"

Mrs. Beanpole caught Josh by the arm, exclaiming:

"Josh! Joshy! Joshy! what are you about? Peet Spinbutton? I don't believe it."

"What!" said Josh, "didn't I hear with my own ears, last night that ever was, Zeb Shute tell me all about it?"

"Zeb Shute! well, what did Zeb Shute say?"

"Why, says he to me:

"'Josh,' says he, 'what do you think?' says he.

"'I don't know, no, n't I,' says I.

"'Tell you what,' says he, 'that 'ere Hannah Downer—'

"'What of Hannah Downer?' says I, for I begun to crawl all over.

"'Tell ye what,' says he; 'she's a whole team.'

"'Ah,' says I, 'she's a whole team, and a horse to let.'

"'Tell ye what,' says he, 'guess somebody has a sneakin' notion that way.'

"'Shouldn't wonder,' says I, feelin' all over in a flustration, thinkin' he meant me.

"'Tell ye what,' says he, 'guess Peet Spinbutton and she's pretty thick together.'

"'How you talk!' says I.

"'Fact,' says he.

"'Well, I never!' says I.

"'Tell ye what,' says he. No, that's all he said."

"Pooh!" said the old woman, "it's all wind, Joshy; it's nothing but Zeb Shute's nonsense."

"Do you think so?" exclaimed Josh, with a stare of uncommon animation, and his mouth wide open.

"No doubt on't, Joshy, my boy," replied she, "for Peggy Downer was here yesterday forenoon, to borrow a cup of starch, and she never mentioned the leastest word about it under the light of the livin' sun."

"If I was only sure of that!" said Josh, laying down the toast-iron and sticking his knuckles into his right eye.

"Joshy, my boy," said the old woman, "I don't believe Hannah Downer ever gin Peet Spinbutton the leastest encouragement in the universal world."

"Think so?" asked Josh, setting his elbows on his knees, his chin in his fists, and fixing his eyes vacantly downward in an angle of forty-five degrees, as if in intense admiration of the back-log.

"I'll tell you what, Joshy," said Mrs. Beanpole, in a motherly tone, "do you just put on your go-to-meetin' suit, and go to see Hannah this blessed night."

"Eh!" exclaimed Josh, starting from his elbows at the astounding boldness of the suggestion, and gazing straight up the chimney. "Do you think she'd let me?"

"Nothin' like tryin', Joshy; must be a first

time. Besides, the old folks are going to lecture, Hannah'll be all alone—hey ! Joshy, my boy ! Nothin' like tryin'."

"Eh ! eh !" said Josh, screwing himself all up in a heap and staring most desperately at the lower button of his own waistcoat—for the thoughts of actually going a courting came over him in a most alarming fashion ; "would ye though, mother ? Hannah's a nice gal, but somehow or other I feel plaguy queer about it."

"Oh, that's quite naiteral, Joshy ; when you once get a goin' it be nothin' at all."

"Higgle, giggle, giggle," said Josh, making a silly, sputtering kind of laugh, "that's the very thing I'm afraid of, that 'ere gettin' a goin'. Hannah Downer is apt to be tarnation smart sometimes ; and I've hearn tell, that courtin' is the hardest thing in the world to begin, though it goes on so slick arterwards."

"Nonsense, Josh, you silly dough-head ; it's only saying two words, and it all goes as straight as a turnpike."

"By the hokey !" said Josh, rolling up his eyes and giving a punch with his fist in the air, "I've an all-fired mind to try it though !"

Josh and his mother held a much longer colloquy upon the matter, the result of which was such an augmentation of his courage for the undertaking, that the courtship was absolutely decided upon; and just after dark, Josh gave his face a sound scrubbing with soapsuds, drew forth his Sunday pantaloons, which were of the brightest cow-colour, and after a good deal of labour, succeeded in getting into them, his legs being somewhat of the longest, and the pantaloons as tight as a glove, so that on seeing him fairly incased, it was somewhat of a puzzle to guess how he could ever get out of them. A flaming red waistcoat, and a grey coat with broad pewter buttons, set off his figure to the greatest advantage, to say nothing of a pair of bran new cow-hide shoes. Then rubbing his long hair with a tallow candle, and sprinkling a handful of Indian meal by way of powder, he twisted it behind with a leather string into a formidable queue, which he drew so tight that it was with the greatest difficulty he could shut his eyes; but this gave him but little concern, as he was determined to be wide awake through the whole affair. Being all equipt, he mounted Old Blueberry, and set off at an

easy trot, which very soon fell into a walk, for the nearer Josh approached the dwelling of his Dulcinea, the more the thought of his great undertaking overpowered him.

Josh rode four times round the house before he found courage to alight; at length he made a desperate effort and pulled up under the lee side of the barn, where he dismounted, tied his horse, and approached the house with fear and trembling. At two rods distance he stopped short. There was a dead silence, and he stood in awful irresolution. All at once a terrible voice, close at hand, caused him to start with great trepidation:— it was nothing but a couple of turkeys who had set up a gobbling from their roost on the top of the barn. Josh looked up, and beheld, by the light of the moon, the old turkey cosily perched by the side of his mate; the sight was overpowering. "Ah! happy, happy turkey!" he mentally exclaimed, and turned about to proceed up the yard, but the next moment felt a violent cut across the broadest part of his nose. He started back again, but discovered it to be only a clothes-line which he had run

against.—"The course of true love never did run smooth." He went fearfully on, thinking of the connubial felicities of the turkey tribe, and the perils of clothes-lines, till he found himself at the door, where he stood fifteen minutes undetermined what to do; and if he had not bethought himself of the precaution of peeping in at the window, it is doubtful whether he would have mustered the courage to enter. But peep he did, and spied Hannah all alone at her knitting-work. This sight emboldened him, and he bolted in without knocking.

What precise sort of compliments Josh made use of in introducing himself, never could be discovered, for Josh laboured under such a confusion of the brain at the time, that he lost all recollection of what passed till he found himself seated in a flag-bottomed chair with a most uncomfortably deep hollow in it. He looked up, and actually saw Hannah sitting in the chimney corner knitting a pepper-and-salt stocking.

"Quite industrious to-night," said Josh.

"Don't know that," replied Hannah.

"Sure on't," returned Josh. "Guess now

you've knit from four to six pearl at the lowest calculation."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Hannah.

"Tarnation!" said Josh, pretending to be struck with admiration at the exploit, though he knew it was nothing to boast of.

"How's your mother, Josh?" asked Hannah.

"Pretty considerable smart, Hannah; how's *your* mother?"

"So, so," replied Hannah; and here the conversation came to a stand.

Josh fumbled in his pockets and stuck his legs out till they reached nearly across the room, in hopes to think of something more to say; but in vain. He then scratched his head, but there appeared to be nothing in it.

"Is't possible," thought he, "that I'm actually here a courting?"

He could hardly believe it, and began to feel very awkward.

"I swow!" he exclaimed, opening his eyes as wide as he could.

"What's the matter?" asked Hannah, a little startled.

"Cotch a 'tarnal great musquash this forenoon."

"Ah!" said Hannah, "how big was it?"

"Big as all out-doors!"

"Lawful heart!" exclaimed Hannah.

Josh now felt a little more at his ease, finding the musquash helped him on so bravely. He hitched his chair about seven feet at a single jerk, nearer to Hannah, and exclaimed:

"Tell ye what, Hannah, I'm all creation for catching musquashes."

"Well, I want to know!" replied Hannah.

Josh twisted his eyes into a squint, and gave her a look of melting tenderness. Hannah perceived it, and did not know whether to laugh or be scared; so, to compromise the matter, she pretended to be taken with a fit of coughing. Josh felt his heart begin to beat, and was fully convinced he was courting, or something very like it; but what to do next was the question.

"Shall I kiss her?" thought he. "No, no, it's a *leetle* too early for that; but I'll tell her I love her." At this thought his heart went bump! bump! bump! harder than ever.

"Hannah!" he exclaimed, in a squeaking voice, and stopped short.

"Hey, Josh!" said Hannah.

"Hannah, I—I—", he rolled up the whites of his eyes, in a most supplicating leer, but the word stuck in his throat. Hannah looked directly in his face; he was in a dreadful puzzle what to say, for he was obliged to say something. His eye fell by accident on a gridiron hanging in the chimney corner:

"What a terrible crack your gridiron's got in it!" exclaimed he.

"Poh!" said Hannah.

Here the conversation came again to a dead stop, for Josh had so exhausted himself in this effort to break the ice, that he was not master of his faculties for several minutes; and when he came fairly to his senses, he found himself counting the tickings of an old wooden clock that stood in the corner. He counted and counted till he had numbered three hundred and ninety-seven ticks, when he luckily heard a cow lowing out of doors.

"Ugh!" said he, "whose cow's that?"

"Drummer Tucker's," replied Hannah.

"Drummer Tucker's! Well, I want to know!"

This reply suggested an idea.

"Hannah," asked he, "did you ever see a dromedary?"

"No; did you, Josh?"

"No," returned Josh, "I never see nothin' in my life but a green monkey; and then I was a'most skeered to death!"

"Lawful heart! Mercy's sake!" exclaimed Hannah, and here the conversation came to a pause again.

The longer they sat, the more awkwardly Josh found himself situated; he sat bolt upright in his chair, with his knees close together and his head stooping forward in such a manner that his long queue stuck out horizontally behind, and his eyes stuck out horizontally before, like those of a lobster. For several minutes he sat contemplating the handle of the warming-pan that hung by the side of the fireplace; and then gradually elevating his line of vision, came in sight of a huge crook-necked squash lying on the mantel-piece. Then he looked at Hannah, and then at the dish-cloth in the mouth of the oven, and from the dish-cloth made a transition back to the warming-pan.

"Courting," thought Josh, "is awful hard

work." The perspiration stood on his forehead, and his eel-skin queue pulled so tight that he began to fear the top of his head was coming off; but not a word could he say. And just at that moment a green stick of wood upon the fire began to sing in a dismal tone, "*Que, que, que, que, que.*" Nothing frets the nerves more when a body is a little fidgetty, than the singing and sputtering of a stick of wood. Josh felt worse than ever, but the stick kept on: *que, que, que, quiddle, de dee, que, que, quiddledy quiddledy que, que, que.* Josh caught up the tongs and gave the fire a tremendous poke. This exertion somewhat relieved him.

"Hannah!" said he, hitching his chair a yard nearer.

"Well, Josh."

"Now," thought Josh, "I *will* tell I love her."

"Hannah," said he again, "I—" He stared so wildly and made such a horrible grimace that Hannah bounced from her chair. "Hannah, I say," repeated he; but here again his courage failed him.

"What say, Josh?"

"I—I— it's a grand time for turnips," said Josh. "Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

"Poh!" returned Hannah, "let alone of my apron-string, you Josh."

Josh sat in silence and despair for some time longer, growing more and more nervous every moment. Presently the stick of wood burst out squeaking again in the most doleful style imaginable: *Quiddledy, quiddledy quee-ee-ee-iddledy, que, que quiddledy quiddledy que que que-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee.* Josh could not bear it any longer, for he verily believed his skull-bone was splitting.

"I swaggers!" he exclaimed, "this is too bad!"

"What's the matter, Josh?" asked Hannah, in considerable alarm.

"Suthin' ails me," said Josh.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Hannah; "shan't I get you a mug of cider?"

"Do," replied Josh, "for I don't feel as I used to did."

Hannah ran down to the cellar and returned with a quart mug of cider. Josh put it to his lips and took a heavy pull. It was what the farmers call *hard* cider, and Josh verily feared his eyes would start out of his head while he was drinking it, but after several desperate gulps he succeeded in drain-

ing the mug. Then pulling a blue and white check handkerchief from his pocket, he rubbed his face very hard, and looked straight into the fire.

But in a few minutes he found his spirits wonderfully rising; he lifted up his eyes, hitched his chair nearer, sent Hannah a sly look, and actually gave a loud giggle. Hannah giggled in reply, for giggling, like gaping, is contagious. In two minutes more, his courage rose higher; he threw one of his long legs across the other, gave a grin, slapped his hand upon his knee, and exclaimed as bold as a lion:

"Hannah, if a young feller was for to go to offer for to kiss you, what d'ye think ye should do?"

Having uttered these words, he stopped short, his mouth wide open, in gaping astonishment at his own temerity.

If Hannah did not blush, it was probably owing to her being at that moment engaged in blowing the fire at a desperate rate with an enormous pair of broken-winded bellows, which occupation had set her all in a blowze.

She understood the hint, and replied:

"Guess ye'd better not try, Josh."

Whether this was intended as a warning, or an invitation, never could be satisfactorily known. Josh did not stop to inquire, but he thought it too good a chance to be lost:

"I'll kiss her! by Golly!" he exclaimed to himself.

He made a bounce from his chair and seized the nozzle of the bellows, which Hannah was sticking at that moment under a huge iron pot over the fire. Now, in this pot were apples a stewing, and so it happened that Hannah, in the confusion occasioned by the visit of Josh, had made a mistake and put in sour apples instead of sweet ones: sour apples when cooking, everybody knows, are apt to explode like bomb-shells. Hannah had been puffing at the bellows with might and main, and raised the heat to a mischievous degree; there was no safety-valve in the pot-lid, and just as Josh was upon the point of snatching a kiss, whop! the whole contents of the pot went off in their faces!

At the same moment the door flew open, and the whole Downer family came in from meeting. Such a sight as they beheld! There stood Josh beplastered with apple-sauce from head to foot, and frightened worse than if he had seen a green mon-

key. Hannah made her escape, and left Josh to explain the catastrophe. He rolled up his eyes in utter dismay.

"What *is* the matter?" exclaimed Peggy Downer.

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!" replied Josh, and that was all he could say.

"Goodness' sake! Josh Beanpole! is that you?" asked Mother Downer, for Josh was so beplastered, beluted and transubstantiated by the apple-sauce, that she did not at first discover who it was.

"I d'n know—no, n't I," said Josh.

"What a spot o' work!" exclaimed Peggy.

Josh looked down at his pantaloons.

"Oh! forever!" he exclaimed, "this beats the gineral trainin'!"

How matters were explained, and how Josh got safe home, I cannot stop to explain. As to the final result of the courtship, the reader may as well be informed that Josh had too much genuine Yankee resolution to be beaten away from his prize by a broadside of baked apples. In fact, it was but a few months afterwards, that Deacon Powderpost, the town clerk, was digging all alone in the middle of his ten-acre potato field, and spied Josh Beanpole

looming up over the top of the hill. Josh looked all around the horizon, and finding no other living soul to be seen, came scrambling over the potato hills, and got right behind the Deacon, where in about a quarter of an hour he mustered courage sufficient to ask him to step aside, as he had a communication for his private ear. To make a long story short, Josh and Hannah were published the next Sunday.

III.

PETER BRUSH, THE GREAT USED UP.*

It was November; soon after election time, when a considerable portion of the political world are apt to be despondent, and external things appear to do their utmost to keep them so. November, the season of dejection, when pride itself loses its imperious port; when ambition gives place to melancholy; when beauty hardly takes the trouble to look in the glass; and when existence doffs its rainbow hues, and wears an aspect of such dull, common-place reality, that hope leaves the world

* By Neal.

for a temporary excursion, and those who cannot do without her inspiring presence, borrow the aid of pistols, cords, and chemicals, and send themselves on a longer journey, expecting to find her by the way:—a season, when the hair will not stay in curl; when the walls weep dewy drops, to the great detriment of paper-hangings, and of every species of colouring with which they are adorned; when the banisters distil liquids, anything but beneficial to white gloves; when nature fills the ponds, and when window-washing is the only species of amusement at all popular among housekeepers.

It was on the worst of nights in that worst of seasons. The atmosphere was in a condition of which it is difficult to speak with respect, much as we may be disposed to applaud the doings of nature. It was damp, foggy, and drizzling; to sum up its imperfections in a sonorous and descriptive epithet, it was "'orrid muggy weather."

The air hung about the wayfarer in warm, unhealthy folds, and extracted the starch from his shirt-collar and from the bosom of his dickey, with as much rapidity as it robbed his spirits of their elasticity, and melted the sugar of self-complacency from his mind.

The street lamps emitted a ghastly white glare, and were so hemmed in with vapoury wreaths, that their best efforts could not project a ray of light three feet from the burner. Gloom was universal, and any change, even to the heat of Africa, or to the frosts of the arctic circle, would, in comparison, have been delightful. The pigs' tails no longer waved in graceful sinuosities; while the tail of each night-roving, hectoring bull-dog ceased flaunting toward the clouds, a banner of wrath and defiance to punier creatures, and hung down drooping and dejected, an emblem of a heart little disposed to quarrel and offence.

The ornamentals of the brute creation being thus below par, it was not surprising that men, with cares on their shoulders and raggedness in their trousers, should likewise be more melancholy than on occasions of a brighter character.

Every one at all subject to the "skyey influences," who has had trouble enough to tear his clothes, and to teach him that the staple of this mundane existence is not exclusively made up of fun, has felt that philosophy is but a barometrical affair, and that he who is proof against sorrow when the air is clear and bracing, may be a very miserable wretch,

with no greater cause, when the wind sits in another quarter.

Peter Brush is a man of this susceptible class. His nervous system is of the most delicate organization, and responds to the changes of the weather, as an Eolian harp sings to the fitful swellings of the breeze.

Peter was abroad on the night of which we speak; either because, unlike the younger Brutus, he had no Portia near to tell him that such exposure was "not physical," and that it was the part of prudence to go to bed, or that, although aware of the dangers of miasma to a man of his constitution, he did not happen at that precise moment to have access to either house or bed; in his opinion, two essential pre-requisites to couching himself, as he regarded taking it *al fresco*, on a cellar door, not likely to answer any sanitary purpose.

We incline ourselves to the opinion that he was in the dilemma last mentioned, as it had previously been the fate of other great men. But be that as it may, Mr. Peter Brush was in the street, as melancholy as an unbraced drum, "a gib-ed cat, or a lugged bear."

Seated upon the curb, with his feet across the

gutter, he placed his elbow on a stepping-stone, and like Juliet on the balcony, leaned his head upon his hand—a hand that would perhaps have been the better of a covering, though none would have been rash enough to volunteer to be a glove upon it. He was in a dilapidated condition—out at elbows, out at knees, out of pocket, out of office, out of spirits, and out in the street—an "out and outer" in every respect, and as *outré* a mortal as ever the eye of man did rest upon.

For some time, Mr. Brush's reflections had been silent. Following Hamlet's advice, he "gave them an understanding, but no tongue;" and he relieved himself at intervals by spitting forlornly into the kennel. At length, suffering his locked hands to fall between his knees, and heaving a deep sigh, he spoke:

"A long time ago, my ma used to put on her specs and say, 'Peter, my son, put not your trust in princes;' and from that day to this I haven't done anything of the kind, because none on 'em ever wanted to borry nothing of me: and I never see a prince or a king, but one or two, and they had been rotated out of office, to borry nothing of them. Princes! pooh! Put not your trust in politicianers

—them's my sentiments. You might jist as well try to hold an eel by the tail. I don't care which side they're on, for I've tried both, and I know. Put not your trust in politicianers, or you'll get a hyst.

"Ten years ago it came into my head that things weren't going on right; so I pretty nearly gave myself up tee-totally to the good of the republic, and left the shop to look out for itself. I was brimfull of patriotism, and so uneasy in my mind for the salivation of freedom, I couldn't work. I tried to guess which side was going to win, and I stuck to it like wax; sometimes I was a-one side, sometimes I was a-tother, and sometimes I straddled till the election was over, and came up jist in time to jine the hurrah. It was good I was after; and what good could I do if I wasn't on the 'lected side? But, after all, it was never a bit of use. Whenever the battle was over, no matter what side was sharing out the loaves and the fishes, and I stepped up, I'll be hanged if they didn't cram all they could into their own mouths, put their arms over some, and grab at all the rest with their paws, and say, 'Go away, white man, you ain't capable.' Capable! what's the reason I ain't capable? I've

got as extensive a throat as any of 'em, and I could swallow the loaves and fishes without choking, if each loaf was as big as a grindstone and each fish as big as a sturgeon. Give Peter a chance, and leave him alone for that. Then, another time when I called—'I want some spoils,' says I; 'a small bucket full of spoils. Whichever side gets in, shares the spoils, don't they?' So they first grinned, and then they ups and tells me that virtue like mine was its own reward, and that spoils might spoil me. But it was *no* spoils that spoilt me, and *no* loaf and fish that starved me—I'm spoilt because I couldn't get either. Put not your trust in politicianers—I say it agin. Both sides used me jist alike.

"Here I've been serving my country, more or less, these ten years, like a patriot—going to town meetings, hurraing my daylights out, and getting as blue as blazes—blocking the windows, getting licked fifty times, and having more black eyes and bloody noses than you could shake a stick at, all for the common good, and for the purity of our illegal rights—and all for what? Why, for nix. If any good has come of it, the country has put it into her own pocket, and swindled me out of my arnings. I can't get no office! Republics is ungrateful! It wasn't reward

I was after. I scorns the base insinivation. I only wanted to be took care of, and have nothing to do but to take care of the public, and I've only got half—nothing to do! Being took care of was the main thing. Republics *is* ungrateful; I'm swaggered if they ain't. This is the way old sojers is served."

Peter, having thus unpacked his o'erfraught heart, heaved a sigh or two, as every one does after a recapitulation of their own injuries, and remained for a few minutes wrapped in abstraction.

"Well, well," said he, mournfully, swaying his head to and fro after the sagacious fashion of Lord Burleigh, "live and learn—live and learn—the world's not what a man takes it for before he finds it out. Whiskers grow a good deal sooner than experience—genus and patriotism ain't got no chance—heigh-ho!—But anyhow, a man might as well be under kiver as out in the open air in sich weather as this. It's as cheap laying down as it is settin' up, and there's not so much wear and tear about it."

With a groan, a yawn, and a sigh, Peter Brush slowly arose, and stretching himself like a drowsy lion, he walked towards the steps of a neighbouring house. Having reached the top of the flight, he

turned about and looked round with a scrutinizing glance, peering both up and down the street, to ascertain that none of the hereditary enemies of the Brushes were in the vicinity. Being satisfied on that score, he prepared to enjoy all the comfort that his peculiar situation could command. According to the modern system of warfare, he carried no baggage to encumber his motions, and was always ready to bivouac without troublesome preliminaries. He therefore placed himself on the upper step, so that he was just within the doorway, his head reclining against one side of it, and his feet braced against the other, blockading the passage in a very effectual manner. He adjusted himself in a position as carefully as the Sybarite who was annoyed at the wrinkle of a rose-leaf on his couch, grunting at each motion like a Daniel Lambert at his toilet, and he made minute alterations in his attitude several times before he appeared perfectly satisfied that he had effected the best arrangements that could be devised.

After reposing for a while as if "the flinty and steel couch of war were his thrice-driven bed of down," he moved his head with an exclamation of impatience at the hardness of the wall, and taking

his time-worn beaver, he crumpled it up, and mollified the austerity of his bolster by using the crushed hat as a pillow.

"That will do," ejaculated Brush, clasping his hands before him, and twirling his thumbs; and he then closed his eyes for the purpose of reflecting upon his condition with a more perfect concentration of thought than can be obtained when outward objects distract the mind. But thinking in this way is always a hazardous experiment, whether it be after dinner, or in the evening; and Peter Brush soon unwittingly fell into a troubled, murmuring sleep, in which his words were mere repetitions of what he had said before, the general scope of the argument being to prove the received axiom of former times, that republics do not distribute their favours in proportion to services rendered, and that, in the speaker's opinion, they are not, in this respect, much better than the princes against whom his mother cautioned him. Such, at least, was the conviction of Mr. Brush; at which he had arrived, not by theory and distant observation, but by his own personal experience.

It is a long lane which has no turning, and it is a long sleep in the open air, especially in a city,

which does not meet with interruption. Brush found it so in this instance, as he had indeed more than once before. Several gentlemen, followed by a dog, arrived at the foot of the steps, and, after a short conversation, dispersed each to his several home. One, however, remained—the owner of the dog—who, whistling for his canine favourite, took out his night-key, and walked up the steps. The dog, bounding before his master, suddenly stopped, and after attentively regarding the recumbent Brush, uttered a sharp rapid bark.

The rapidity of mental operations is such that it frequently happens, if sleep be disturbed by external sounds, that the noise is instantly caught up by the ear, and incorporated with the subject of the dream —or perhaps a dream is instantaneously formed upon the nucleus suggested by the vibration of the tympanum. The bark of the dog had one of these effects upon Mr. Brush.

"Bow! wow! waugh!" said the dog.

"There's a fellow making a speech against our side," muttered Peter; "but it's all talk—where's your facts?—print your speech in pamphlet form, and I'll answer it. Hurray for us!—everybody else is rascals—nothing but ruination when that fellow's

principles get the upper hand—our side for ever—we're the boys!"

"Be still, Ponto!" said the gentleman. "Now, Sir, be pleased to get up, and carry yourself to some other place. I don't know which side has the honour of claiming you, but you are certainly on the wrong side at present."

"Don't be official and trouble yourself about other people's business," said Brush, trying to open his eyes; "don't be official, for it isn't the genteel thing."

"Not official! what do you mean by that? I shall be very official, and trundle you down the steps if you are not a little more rapid in your motions."

"Oh, very well, responded Brush, as he wheeled round in a sitting posture, and fronted the stranger —"very well; be as sassy as you please; I suppose you've got an office, by the way you talk—you've got one of the fishes, though perhaps it is but a minny, and I ain't; but if I had, I'd show you a thing or two. Be sassy, be anything, Mr. Noodle-soup. I don't know which side you're on either, but I do know one thing; it isn't saying much for your boss politicianer that he chose you when I must have

been on his list for promotion; that's all, though you are so stiff, and think yourself pretty to look at. But them that's pretty to look at ain't always good 'uns to go, or you wouldn't be poking here. Be off; there's no more business before this meeting, and you may adjourn. It's moved, seconded, and carried—pay the landlord for the use of the room as you go."

The stranger, now becoming somewhat amused, felt a disposition to entertain himself a little with Peter.

"How does it happen," said he, "that such a public-spirited individual as you appear to be should find himself in this condition? You've had a little too much of the *stimulantibus*, I fear."

"I don't know Greek, but I guess what you mean," was the answer. "It's owing to the weather—part to the weather, and part because republics is ungrateful; that's considerable the biggest part. Either part is excuse enough, and both together makes it a credit. When it's such weather as this, it takes the electerizing fluid out of you; and if you want to feel something like; do you know what 'something like' is? it's cat-bird, jam up; if you want to feel so, you must pour a

little of the electerizing fluid into you. In this kind of weather you must tune yourself up, and get rosumed, or you ain't good for much, tuned up to concert pitch. But all that's a trifle; put not your trust in politicianers."

"And why not, Mr. Rosum?"

"Why not! Help us up—there—steady she goes—hold on! Why not?—look at me, and you'll see the why as large as life. I'm the why you mustn't put your trust in politicianers. I'm a rig'lar patriot—look at my coat. I'm all for the public good—twig the holes in my trousers. I'm steady in my course, and I'm upright in my conduct—don't let me fall down. I've tried all parties, year in and year out, just by way of making myself popular and agreeable; and I've tried to be on both sides at once," roared Brush, with great emphasis, as he slipped and fell, "and this is the end of it!"

His auditor laughed heartily at this striking illustration of the political course of Peter Brush, and seemed quite gratified with so strong a proof of the danger of endeavouring to be on two sides at once. He therefore assisted the fallen to rise.

"Are you hurt?"

"No, I'm used to being knocked about—the steps and the pavement are no worse than other people—they're like politicianers—you can't put any trust in 'em. But," continued Brush, drawing a roll of crumbled paper from the crown of his still more crumpled hat, "see here now, you're a clever fellow, and I'll get you to sign my recommendation. Here's a splendid character for me all ready wrote down, so it won't give you any trouble, only to put your name to it."

"But what office does it recommend you for? what kind of recommendation is it?"

"It's a circular recommend—a slap at anything that's going."

"Firing into the flock, I suppose!"

"That's it exactly, good character, fit for any fat post either under the city government, the state government, or the gineral government. Now jist put your fist to it," added Peter, in his most persuasive tones, as he smoothed the paper over his knee, spread it upon the step, and produced a bit of lead pencil which he first moistened with his lips, and then offered to his interlocutor.

"Excuse me," was the laughing response; "it's too dark, I can't see either to read or write.

But what made you a politicianer? Haven't you got a trade."

"Trade! yes," replied Brush, contemptuously; "but what's a trade, when a feller's got a soul! I love my country, and I want an office—I don't care what, so it's fat and easy. I've a genus for governing—for telling people what to do, and looking at 'em do it. I want to take care of my country, and I want my country to take care of me. Head work is the trade I'm made for—talking—that's my line—talking in the streets, talking in the bar rooms, talking in the oyster cellars. Talking is the grease for the waggon wheels of the body politic and the body corpulent, and nothing will go on well till I've got my say in the matter; for I can talk all day, and most of the night, only stopping to wet my whistle. But parties is all alike—all ungrateful; no respect for genus—no respect for me. I've tried both sides, got nothing, and I've a great mind to knock off and call it half a day. I would, if my genus didn't make me talk, and think, and sleep so much I can't find time to work."

"Well," said the stranger, "you must find time to go away. You're too noisy. How would you like to go before the Mayor?"

"No, I'd rather not. Stop—now I think of it,

I've asked him before; but perhaps if you'd speak a good word, he'd give me the first vacancy. Introduce me properly, and say that I want something to do shocking—no, not something to do—I want something to get; my genus won't let me work. I'd like to have a fat salary, and to be general superintendent of things in general and nothing in particular, so I could walk about the streets, and see what is going on. Now, put my best leg foremost—say how I can make speeches, and how I can hurray at elections."

"Away with you," said the stranger, as he ran up the steps, and opened the door. "Make no noise in this neighbourhood, or you'll be taken care of soon enough."

"Well, now, if that isn't ungrateful," soliloquized Brush; "keep me hear talking, and then slap the door right in my face. That's the way politicianers serve me, and it's about all I'd a right to expect. Oh, pshaw! sich a world—sich a people!"

Peter rolled up his "circular recommend" put it in his hat, and slowly sauntered away. As he is not yet provided for, he should receive the earliest attention of parties, or disappointment may induce him to abandon both, take the field "upon his own

hook," and constitute an independent faction under the name of the "Brush party," the cardinal principle of which will be that peculiarly novel impulse to action, hostility to all "politicianers" who are not on the same side.

IV.

COUSIN SALLY DILLIARD.

A LEGAL SKETCH IN THE "OLD NORTH STATE."

SCENE: *A Court of Justice in North Carolina.*

A *beardless* disciple of Themis rises, and thus addresses the court:

"May it please your worships, and you, gentlemen of the jury, since it has been my fortune (good or bad, I will not say) to exercise myself in legal disquisitions, it has never befallen me to be obliged to prosecute so direful, marked, and malicious an assault—a more wilful, violent, dangerous battery—and finally, a more diabolical breach of the peace, has seldom happened in a civilized country; and I

dare say it has seldom been your duty to pass upon one so shocking to benevolent feelings, as this which took place over at Captain Rice's, in this county. But you will hear from the witnesses."

The witnesses being sworn, two or three were examined and deposed. One said that he heard the noise, and did not see the fight; another that he had seen the row, but didn't know who struck first; and a third, that he was very drunk, and couldn't say much about the skrimmage.

Lawyer Chops. I am sorry, gentlemen, to have occupied your time with the stupidity of the witnesses examined. It arises, gentlemen, altogether from misapprehension on my part. Had I known, as I now do, that I had a witness in attendance who was well acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, and who was able to make himself clearly understood by the court and jury, I should not so long have trespassed upon your time and patience. Come forward, Mr. Harris, and be sworn.

So forward comes the witness, a fat, shuffy old man, a "leetle" corned, and took his oath with an air.

Chops. Harris, we wish you to tell all about the riot that happened the other day at Captain Rice's;

and as a good deal of time has already been wasted in circumlocution, we wish you to be compendious, and at the same time as explicit, as possible.

Harris. Adzackly (giving the lawyer a knowing wink, and at the same time clearing his throat). Captain Rice, he gin a treat, and cousin Sally Dilliard, she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go? I told cousin Sally Dilliard that my wife was poorly, being as how she had a touch of the rheumatics in the hip, and the big swamp was in the road, and the big swamp was up, for there had been a heap of rain lately; but howsomever, as it was she, cousin Sally Dilliard, my wife she mout go. Well, cousin Sally Dilliard then axed me if Mose he moutn't go? I told cousin Sally Dilliard that he was the foreman of the crap, and the crap was smartly in the grass; but howsomever as it was she, cousin Sally Dilliard, Mose he mout go.

Chops. In the name of common sense, Mr. Harris, what do you mean by this rigmarole?

Witness. Captain Rice he gin a treat, and cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go? I told cousin Sally Dilliard—

Chops. Stop, Sir, if you please; we don't want to hear anything about your cousin Sally Dilliard and your wife. Tell us about the fight at Rice's.

Witness. Well, I will, Sir, if you will let me.

Chops. Well, Sir, go on.

Witness. Well, Sir, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go—

Chops. There it is again. Witness, please to stop.

Witness. Well, Sir, what do you want?

Chops. We want to know about the fight; and you must not proceed in this impertinent story. Do you know anything about the matter before the court?

Witness. To be sure, I do.

Chops. Well, go on and tell it, and nothing else.

Witness. Well, Captain Rice he gin a treat—

Chops. This is intolerable. May it please the court, I move that this witness be committed for a contempt; he seems to be trifling with this court.

Court. Witness, you are now before a court of justice, and unless you behave yourself in a more becoming manner, you will be sent to gaol; so begin and tell what you know about the fight at Captain Rice's.

Witness. [alarmed.] Well, gentlemen, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard—

Chops. I hope the witness may be ordered into custody.

Court. [after deliberating.] Mr. Attorney, the Court is of opinion that we may save time by telling witness to go on in his own way. Proceed, Mr. Harris, with your story, but stick to the point.

Witness. Yes, gentlemen. Well, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she mout go? I told Cousin Sally Dilliard that my wife she was poorly, being as how she had the rheumatics in the hips, and the big swamp was up; but howsomever, as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, my wife she mout go. Well, Cousin Sally Dilliard then axed me if Mose he moutn't go. I told Cousin Sally Dilliard as how Mose he was foreman of the crap, and the crap was smartly in

the grass; but howsomever, as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, Mose he mout go. So they goes on together, Mose, my wife, and Cousin Sally Dilliard, and they came to the big swamp and it was up, as I was telling you; but being as how there was a log across the big swamp, Cousin Sally Dilliard and Mose, like genteel folks, they walked the log; but my wife, like a darned fool, hoisted her coats and waded through. *And that's all I know about the fight.*

V.

THE AGE OF WONDERS.

My neighbour over the way, Colonel Swallowmore, thinks himself born in the age of wonders:—and no wonder he thinks so, for he reads the newspapers and believes them! It is astonishing how gravely the Colonel gulps down every crude lump of monstrous fudge the papers contain. Sea-serpents, crook-necked squashes, consumption cured, talking pigs, and three-legged cats, are nothing to an appetite like his. He believes electioneering speeches and predictions of political quidnuncs. All is fish that comes to his net.

"These are times! Mr. Titterwell, these are

times, indeed!" says he to me, with a most rueful visage, as he lays down the newspaper. "What *are* we coming to! People have got to *such* a pass! Something is certainly going to happen before long. I'm really, really frightened to think of it. There never were such doings in my day. Positively I've got so now that I an't surprised at anything!"

And so he shakes his head, hitches up his breeches, sticks his spectacles higher up his nose, and reads the wonders of the day over again.

Twenty-eight several times has this country been irretrievably ruined since I knew the Colonel. Seven times has the world come quite to an end. Nineteen times have we had the hardest winter ever known within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Twenty-one times there never was seen such a backward spring. Forty-seven times the approaching session of Congress has been one of uncommon interest; and thirteen thousand, nine hundred and sixty-six times has death snatched away the best man upon earth, leaving mortals inconsolable, and society with an immense void.

The mental agitations he has undergone in

pondering upon the "wonderful wonders" that spring up as plenty as grasshoppers in this wonderful age, are not to be described; for the Colonel takes an immense interest in public affairs, and cannot see the universe go to ruin about his ears without pangs of sympathy. Whatever mole-hill he stumbles upon, he makes a mountain of it.

He thought the Salem mill-dam absolutely necessary to the balance of power, and was certain that the bridge over Peg's Run was the only means of saving the nation.

He went to bed in a great fright on reading in the paper that Emerson's Spelling-book would overthrow the liberties of the country; and he was struck with the deepest alarm when he heard of the feud that had broken out between the Houses of Correction and Reformation about a cart-load of chips.

I shall never forget the anxiety that beset him last summer when the City Council could not come to a choice about the Superintendent of Drains. The newspapers were full of the affair, and the Colonel, I verily believe, would have worried himself into a nervous fever, had this alarming schism

between the two branches of the city government been carried much farther.

"A strange affair, Mr. Titterwell, a very mysterious affair," said he. "There are some dark, under-ground manœuvres going on in this matter, depend upon it; and really the Mayor and Aldermen—" here he turned up the whites of his eyes and shook his head. Heaven only knows what he thought of those great dignitaries. However, the affair of the drains got through without any great catastrophe to folk above ground, that ever I could learn, and the Colonel's consternation subsided for that time.

All the world were going mad the other day about white mustard-seed.

"Pray, Colonel," said I, "what is white mustard-seed to you or me? Can't we eat our bread and butter, and sleep till six in the morning, without troubling our heads about white mustard-seed? Didn't we fight the battles of the revolution without white mustard-seed? Didn't Samson carry off the gates of Gaza without white mustard-seed? Didn't your blessed old grandmother knit stockings and live to the age of ninety without white mustard-seed? Then what's the use of minding

the dolts in the newspapers who tell you that white mustard-seed is better than meat, drink and sunshine, and that we shall all die untimely deaths unless we take white mustard-seed?"

The Colonel could not understand it: it was a great mystery indeed, but the newspapers were full of it, and he was convinced white mustard-seed had something in it, that would come out in due time. White mustard-seed, however, has had its day; and the Colonel has probably taken to saw-dust, as I heard him talk of Dr. Graham last week.

But of all mortals the Colonel is the most prone to sympathize with the unfortunate public upon the loss of great men. I popped in upon him the day before yesterday, and found him lamenting a huge public calamity.

Three great men had fallen in Israel—an eminent clergyman, an eminent country representative, and an eminent dealer in salt-fish on Long Wharf. The Colonel was triply dolorous upon the matter; society, business, politics, had suffered an immense loss; a loss incalculable, irreparable, and so forth.

I assured the Colonel there was no great cause for apprehension, for the world was pretty sure to turn round once in twenty-four hours, whether great men died or lived.

"The fact is, Colonel," said I, "great men may die as fast as they please for aught I care. I have never been frightened by the death of them since an adventure that happened to me in my ninth year, when I lived in the country."

"What is that?" asked the Colonel.

"I'll tell you," said I.

"On a certain day—a day never to be forgotten by me, news arrived in town that the Governor was dead. No sovereign prince, pontiff, or potentate on the face of the earth, ever appeared so gigantic and formidable to my childish eyes, as that harmless gentleman the Governor of Massachusetts. Imagine the shock occasioned by this announcement! Straightway the bells began tolling, people collected in groups, quidnuncs scoured from place to place, gossips chattered, children gaped in dumb astonishment, and old women with dismal faces ran about croaking 'The Governor is dead!'

"To me these things seemed to betoken the general wreck of nature, for how the order of the universe could subsist after the death of the Governor, was beyond my comprehension. I expected the sun and moon to fall, the stars to shoot from their spheres, and my grandfather's mill-pond to upset. The horrible forebodings

under which I lay down to sleep that night, are not to be described, and it was a long time ere I could close my eyes. In the morning I was awakened by a dreadful rumbling noise. 'The Governor is dead!' I exclaimed, starting up in a terrible fright. The noise continued: I listened, and discovered it to be nothing more than my old grandmother grinding coffee!

"The effect of this prodigious anti-climax can hardly be imagined; never in my life was I so puzzled and confounded as at the first moment of this discovery.

"'What!' said I to myself, 'is the Governor dead, and yet people grind coffee? then it seems we are to eat our breakfast just as if nothing had happened. Is a great man of no more consequence than this?'

"A new ray of light broke in upon me. I fell to pondering upon the occurrence, and five minutes pondering completely demolished the power supreme with which many a pompous owl had stalked through my imagination.

"From that moment, governors, town-clerks, select-men, representatives, justices of the peace, and great people of every degree, lost nine-tenths

of their importance in my eyes, for I plainly saw the world could do without them.

"How often, in after life, have I applied the moral of this incident! How much moving eloquence and dire denunciation have I passed by with the remark:

"'That is a great affair, no doubt, but it won't stop a coffee-mill.'"

VI.

HOW SIMON SUGGS "RAISED JACK."

UNTIL Simon entered his seventeenth year, he lived with his father, an old "hard-shell" Baptist preacher; who, though very pious and remarkably austere, was very avaricious. The old man reared his boys—or endeavoured to do so—according to the strictest requisition of the moral law. But he lived, at the time to which we refer, in Middle Georgia, which was then newly settled; and Simon, whose wits from the time he was a "shirt-tail boy," were always too sharp for his father's, contrived to contract all the coarse vices incident to such a region.

He stole his mother's roosters to fight them at Bob Smith's grocery, and his father's plough-horses to enter them in "quarter" matches at the same place. He pitched dollars with Bob Smith himself, and could "beat him into doll-rags" whenever it came to a measurement. To crown his accomplishments, Simon was tip-top at the game of "old sledge," which was the fashionable game of that era, and was early initiated in the mystery of "stocking the papers."

The vicious habits of Simon were, of course, a sore trouble to his father, Elder Jedediah. He reasoned, he counselled, he remonstrated, he lashed, but Simon was an incorrigible, irreclaimable devil.

One day the simple-minded old man came rather unexpectedly to the field where he had left Simon and Ben, and a negro boy named Bill, at work. Ben was still following his plough, but Simon and Bill were in a fence-corner very earnestly engaged at "seven up." Of course the game was instantly suspended, as soon as they spied the old man sixty or seventy yards off, striding towards them.

It was evidently a "gone case" with Simon and

Bill; but our hero determined to make the best of it. Putting the cards into one pocket, he coolly picked up the small coins which constituted the stake, and fobbed them in the other, remarking:

"Well, Bill, this game's blocked; we'd as well quit."

"But, Massa Simon," remarked the boy, "half dat money's mine. An't you gwine to lemme hab 'em?"

"Oh, never mind the money, Bill; the old man's going to take the bark off of both of us—and besides, with the hand I helt when we quit, I should 'a beat you and won it all any way."

"Well, but, Massa Simon, we nebber finish de game, and de rule—"

"Go to Old Scratch with your rule!" said the impatient Simon; "don't you see daddy's right down upon us, with an armful of hickories? I tell you I hilt nothin' but trumps, and could 'a beat the horns off of a billy-goat. Don't that satisfy you? Somehow or nother your d—d hard to please!" About this time a thought struck Simon, and in a low tone—for by this time the

Reverend Jedediah was close at hand—he continued: "but maybe daddy don't know, *right down sure*, what we've been doin'. Let's try him with a lie—twon't hurt no way; let's tell him we've been playin' mumble-peg."

Bill was perforce compelled to submit to this inequitable adjustment of his claim of a share of the stakes; and of course agreed to the game of mumble-peg. All this was settled and a peg driven in the ground, slyly and hurriedly between Simon's legs as he sat on the ground, just as the old man reached the spot. He carried under his left arm several neatly-trimmed sprouts of formidable length, while in his left hand he held one which he was intently engaged in divesting of its superfluous twigs.

"Soho! youngsters!—*you* in the fence-corner, and the *crop* in the grass? what saith the Scriptur' Simon? 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard,' and so forth and so on. What in the round creation of the yearth have you and that nigger been a-doin'?"

Bill shook with fear, but Simon was cool as a cucumber, and answered his father to the effect that they had been wasting a little time in a game of mumble-peg.

"Mumble-peg! mumble-peg!" repeated old Mr. Suggs, "what's that?"

Simon explained the process of *rooting* for the peg; how the operator got upon his knees, keeping his arms stiff by his side, leaned forward and extracted the peg with his teeth.

"So you git *upon your knees,* do you, to pull up that nasty little stick! you'd better git upon 'em to ask mercy for your sinful souls, and for a dyin' world. But let's see one o' you git the peg up now."

The first impulse of our hero was to volunteer to gratify the curiosity of his worthy sire, but a glance at the old man's countenance changed his "notion," and he remarked that "Bill was a long ways the best hand."

Bill, who did not deem Simon's modesty an omen favourable to himself, was inclined to reciprocate compliments with his young master; but a gesture of impatience from the old man set him instantly upon his knees; and, bending forward, he essayed to lay hold with his teeth, of the peg, which Simon, just at that moment, very wickedly pushed half an inch further down.

Just as the breeches and hide of the boy were

stretched to the uttermost, old Mr. Suggs brought down his longest hickory, with both hands, upon the precise spot where the tension was greatest. With a loud yell, Bill plunged forward, upsetting Simon, and rolled in the grass, rubbing the castigated part with fearful energy. Simon, though overthrown, was unhurt; and he was mentally complimenting himself upon the sagacity which had prevented his illustrating the game of mumble-peg, for the paternal amusement, when his attention was arrested by that worthy person's stooping to pick up something—what is it?—a card upon which Simon had been sitting, and which, therefore, had not gone with the rest of the pack into his pocket.

The simple Mr. Suggs had only a vague idea of the pasteboard abomination called *cards;* and though he decidedly inclined to the opinion that this was one, he was by no means certain of the fact. Had Simon known this, he would certainly have escaped; but he did not. His father, assuming the look of extreme sapiency which is always worn by the interrogator who does not desire or expect to increase his knowledge by his questions, asked:

"What's this, Simon?"

"The Jack a-dimunts," promptly responded Simon, who gave up all as lost after this *faux pas*.

"What was it doin' down thar, Simon, my sonny?" continued Mr. Suggs, in an ironically affectionate tone of voice.

"I had it under my leg thar, to make it on Bill, the first time it come trumps," was the ready reply.

"What's trumps?" asked Mr. Suggs, with a view of arriving at the import of the word.

"Nothin' ain't trumps *now*," said Simon, who misapprehended his father's meaning, "but *clubs* was, when you come along and busted up the game."

A part of this answer was Greek to the Reverend Mr. Suggs, but a portion of it was full of meaning. They had, then, most unquestionably been "throwing" cards, the scoundrels! the "oudacious" little hellions!

"To the 'Mulberry,' with both on ye! in a hurry," said the old man, sternly.

But the lads were not disposed to be in a "hurry," for "the Mulberry" was the scene of all formal

punishment administered during work hours in the field. Simon followed his father, however; but made, as he went along, all manner of "faces" at the old man's back; gesticulated as if he were going to strike him between the shoulders with his fists; and kicking at him so as almost to touch his coat-tail with his shoe. In this style they walked on to the mulberry-tree, in whose shade Simon's brother Ben was resting.

It must not be supposed that, during the walk to the place of punishment, Simon's mind was either inactive or engaged in suggesting the grimaces and contortions wherewith he was pantomimically expressing his irreverent sentiments towards his father. Far from it. The movements of his limbs and features were the mere workings of habit—the self-grinding of the corporeal machine—for which his reasoning half was only remotely responsible. For while Simon's person was thus on its own account, "making game" of old Jedediah, his wits, in view of the anticipated flogging, were dashing, springing, bounding, darting about, in hot chase of some expedient suitable to the necessities of the case—much after the manner in which puss, when Betty, armed with the broom, and hotly seeking

vengeance for the pantry robbed or room defiled, has closed upon her the garret doors and windows, attempts all sorts of impossible exits, comes down at last in the corner, with panting side and glaring eye, exhausted and defenceless. Our unfortunate hero could devise nothing by which he could reasonably expect to escape the heavy blows of his father. Having arrived at this conclusion and the "Mulberry" about the same time, he stood with a dogged look, awaiting the issue.

The old man Suggs made no remark to any one while he was seizing up Bill—a process which, though by no means novel to Simon, seemed to excite in him a sort of painful interest. He watched it closely, as if to learn the precise fashion of his father's knot; and when at last Bill was strung up a-tiptoe to a limb, and the whipping commenced, Simon's eye followed every movement of his father's arm; and as each blow descended upon the bare shoulders of his sable friend, his own body writhed and "wriggled" in involuntary sympathy.

"It's the devil!—it's tarnation," said Simon to himself, "to take such a wallopin' as that. Why the old man looks like he wants to git to the holler,

if he could—rot his picter! It's wuth, at the least, fifty cents—je-e-miny, how *that* hurt!—yes, it's wuth three-quarters of a dollar, to take that 'ere lickin'! Wonder if I'm 'predestinated,' as old Jed'diah says, to get the feller to it? Lord, how daddy blows! I do wish he'd bust right open, the darn'd old deer-face! If 'twan't for Ben helpin' him, I b'lieve I'd give the old dog a tussel when it comes for my turn. It couldn't make the thing no wuss, if it didn't make it no better. Drot it! what do boys have daddies for, any how? 'Taint for nuthin' but jist to beat 'em and work 'em—There's some use in mammies—I kin poke my finger right in the old 'oman's eye, and keep it thar, and if I say it aint thar, she'll say 'taint thar, too. I wish she was here to hold daddy off. If 'twan't so fur, I'd holler for her any how. How she would cling to the old feller's coat-tail!"

Mr. Jedediah Suggs let down Bill, and untied him. Approaching Simon, whose coat was off:

"Come, Simon, son," said he, "cross them hands, I'm gwine to correct you."

"It aint no use, daddy," said Simon.

"Why so, Simon?"

"Just bekase it aint. I'm gwine to play cards as long as I live. When I go off to myself, I'm gwine to make my livin' by it. So what's the use of beatin' me about it?"

Old Mr. Suggs groaned, as he was wont to do in the pulpit, at this display of Simon's viciousness.

"Simon," said he, "you're a poor ignunt creetur. You don't know nothin' and you've never been no whars. If I was to turn you off, you'd starve in a week."

"I wish you'd try me," said Simon, "and jist see. I'd win more money in a week than you can make in a year. There aint nobody round here kin make seed corn off o' me at cards. I'm rale smart," he added, with great emphasis.

"Simon! Simon! you poor unletered fool. Don't you know that all card-players and chicken-fighters, and horse-racers go to hell? You crack-brained creatur' you. And don't you know that them that play cards always lose their money, and—"

"Who wins it all then, daddy?" asked Simon.

"Shet your mouth, you imperdent, slack-jaw'd dog. Your daddy's a-tryin' to give you some good

advice, and you a-pickin' up his words that way. I know'd a young man once, when I lived in Ogletharp, as went down to Augusty and sold a hundred dollars' worth of cotton for his daddy, and some o' them gambollers got him to drinkin', and the *very first* night he was with 'em they got every cent of his money.

"They couldn't get my money in a *week*," said Simon. "Anybody can git these here green fellows' money; them's the sort I'm a-gwine to watch for, myself. Here's what kin fix the papers jist about as nice as anybody."

"Well, it's no use to argify about the matter," said old Jedediah; "What saith the Scriptur'? 'He that begetteth a fool, doeth it to his sorrow.' Hence, Simon, you're a poor, miserable fool! so, cross your hands!"

"You'd jist as well not, daddy. I tell you I'm gwine to follow playin' cards for a livin', and what's the use o' bangin' a feller about it? I'm as smart as any of 'em, and Bob Smith says them Augusty fellers can't make rent off o' me."

The Reverend Mr. Suggs had, once in his life, gone to Augusta; an extent of travel which in those days was a little unusual. His consideration among

his neighbours was considerably increased by the circumstance, as he had all the benefit of the popular inference that no man could visit the city of Augusta without acquiring a vast superiority over all his untravelled neighbours, in every department of human knowledge. Mr. Suggs, then, very naturally felt ineffably indignant that an individual who had never seen a collection of human habitations larger than a log-house village—an individual, in short, no other or better than Bob Smith—should venture to express an opinion concerning the manners, customs, or anything else appertaining to, or in any wise connected with, the *ultima thule* of back-woods Georgians. There were two propositions which witnessed their own truth to the mind of Mr. Suggs —the one was, that a man who had never been at Augusta, could not know anything about that city, or any place or thing else; the other that one who *had* been there must, of necessity, be not only well informed as to all things connected with the city itself, but perfectly *au fait* upon all subjects whatsoever. It was therefore in a tone of mingled indignation and contempt that he replied to the last remark of Simon.

"*Bob Smith* says—does he? And who's *Bob*

Smith? Much does *Bob Smith* know about Augusty! He's been thar, I reckon! Slipped off yarly some mornin' when nobody warn't noticin', and got back afore night! It's *only* a hundred and fifty mile. Oh yes, *Bob Smith* knows all about it! *I* don't know nothin' about it! *I* a'n't never been to Augusty—I couldn't find the road thar I reckon, ha! ha! *Bob—Smi—th!* The eternal stink! if he was only to see one o' them fine gentlemen in Augusty, with his fine broad-cloath and bell-crown hat, and shoe-boots a-shinin' like silver, he'd take to the woods and kill himself a-runnin'. Bob Smith! that's whar all your devilment comes from, Simon."

"Bob Smith's as good as anybody else, I judge; and a heap smarter than some. He showed me how to cut Jack," continued Simon, "and that's more than some people can do if they *have* been to Augusty."

"If Bob Smith kin do it," said the old man, "I kin too. I don't know it by that name; but if it's book knowledge or plain sense, and Bob kin do it, it's reasonable to s'pose that old Jed'diah Suggs won't be bothered bad. Is it any ways similyar to the rule of three, Simon?"

"Pretty much, daddy, but not adzactly," said Simon, drawing a pack from his pocket to explain. "Now daddy," he proceeded, "you see these here four cards is what we call Jacks. Well, now, the idee is, if you'll take the pack and mix 'em all up together, I'll take off a passel from top, and the bottom one of them I take off will be one of the Jacks."

"Me to mix em fust?" said Jedediah.

"Yes."

"And you not to see but the back of the top one, when you go to 'cut,' as you call it?"

"Jist so, daddy."

"And the backs all jist as like as kin be?" said the senior Suggs, examining the cards.

"More like nor cow-peas," said Simon.

"It can't be done, Simon," observed the old man, with great solemnity.

"Bob Smith kin do it, and so kin I."

"It's agin nater, Simon; thar a'n't a man in Augusty, nor on the top of the yearth, that kin do it!"

"Daddy," said our hero, "ef you'll bet me—"

"What!" thundered old Mr. Suggs, "*bet*, did you say?" and he came down with a *scorer*

across Simon's shoulders—"me, Jed'diah Suggs, that's been in the Lord's sarvice these twenty years —*me* bet, you nasty, sassy, triflin', ugly—"

"I didn't go to say that, daddy; that warn't what I ment, adzactly. I ment to say that ef you'd let me off from this here maulin' you owe me, and *give me* 'Bunch' ef I cut Jack, I'd *give you* all this here silver, ef I did'nt—that's all. To be sure, I allers know'd *you* wouldn't *bet*."

Old Mr. Suggs ascertained the exact amount of the silver which his son handed to him, in an old leathern pouch, for inspection. He also, mentally, compared that sum with an imaginary one, the supposed value of a certain Indian pony, called "Bunch," which he had bought for his "old woman's" Sunday riding, and which had sent the old lady into a fence-corner, the first—and only—time she had ever mounted him. As he weighed the pouch of silver in his hand, Mr. Suggs also endeavoured to analyze the character of the transaction proposed by Simon. "It sartinly *can't* be nothin' but *givin'*, no way it kin be twisted," he murmured to himself. "I *know* he can't do it, so there's no resk. What makes bettin'? The resk. It's a one-sided business, and

I'll jist let him give me all his money, and that'll put all his wild sportin' notions out of his head."

"Will you stand it, daddy?" asked Simon, by way of waking the old man up. "You mought as well, for the whippin' won't do you no good; and as for Bunch, nobody about the plantation won't ride him, but me."

"Simon," replied the old man, "I agree to it. Your old daddy is in a close place about payin' for his land; and this here money—it's jist eleven dollars lacking of twenty-five cents—will help out mightily. But mind, Simon, ef anything's said about this, hereafter, remember, you *give* me the money."

"Very well, daddy, and ef the thing works up instid o' down, I s'pose we'll say you give *me* Bunch—eh?"

"You won't never be troubled to tell how you come by Bunch; the thing's agin natur, and can't be done. What old Jed'diah Suggs knows, he knows as good as anybody. Give me them fixaments, Simon."

Our hero handed the cards to his father, who dropping the plough-line with which he had intended to tie Simon's hands, turned his back to

that individual, in order to prevent his witnessing the operation of *mixing*. He then sat down, and very leisurely commenced shuffling the cards, making, however, an exceedingly awkward job of it. Restive *kings* and *queens* jumped from his hands, or obstinately refused to slide into the company of the rest of the pack. Occasionally, a sprightly *knave* would insist on *facing* his neighbour; or, pressing his edge against another's, half double himself up, and then skip away. But Elder Jedediah perseveringly continued his attempts to subdue the refractory, while heavy drops burst from his forehead, and ran down his cheeks. All of a sudden, an idea, quick and penetrating as a rifle-ball, seemed to have entered the cranium of the old man. He chuckled audibly. The devil had suggested to Mr. Suggs an *impromptu* "stock," which would place the chances of Simon—already sufficiently slim in the old man's opinion—without the range of possibility. Mr. Suggs forthwith proceeded to cull out all the *picter cards*—so as to be certain to include the *jacks*—and place them at the bottom; with the evident intention of keeping Simon's fingers above these when he should cut. Our hero, who was quietly looking over his

father's shoulders all the time, did not seem alarmed by this disposition of the cards; on the contrary, he smiled as if he felt perfectly confident of success, in spite of it.

"Now, daddy," said Simon, when his father had announced himself ready, "narry one of us aint got to look at the cards, while I'm a cuttin'; if we do, it'll spile the conjuration."

"Very well."

"And another thing—you've got to look me right dead in the eye, daddy—will you?

"To be sure—to be sure," said Mr. Suggs; "fire away."

Simon walked up close to his father, and placed his hand on the pack. Old Mr. Suggs looked in Simon's eye, and Simon returned the look for about three seconds, during which a close observer might have detected a suspicious working of the wrist of the hand on the cards, but the elder Suggs did not remark it.

"Wake snakes! day's a breakin'! Rise Jack!" said Simon, cutting half a dozen cards from the top of the pack, and presenting the face of the bottom one for the inspection of his father.

It was the Jack of Hearts!

Old Mr. Suggs staggered back several steps, with uplifted eyes and hands!

"Marciful Master!" he exclaimed, "ef the boy haint! well, how in the round creation of the ——! Ben, did you ever! to be sure and sartin, Satan has power on this yearth!" and Mr. Suggs groaned in heavy bitterness.

"You never seed nothin' like that in *Augusty*, did ye, daddy?" asked Simon, with a malicious wink at Ben.

"Simon, *how* did you do it?" queried the old man, without noticing his son's question.

"Do it, daddy? Do it? 'Taint nothin'. I done it jest as easy as—shootin'."

Whether this explanation was entirely, or in any degree, satisfactory to the perplexed mind of the Elder Jedediah Suggs, cannot, after the lapse of time which has intervened, be sufficiently ascertained. It is certain, however, that he pressed the investigation no farther, but merely requested his son Benjamin to witness the fact that, in consideration of his love and affection for his son Simon, and in order to furnish the donee with the means of leaving that portion of the state of Georgia, he bestowed upon him the impracticable pony, "Bunch."

"Jist so, daddy, jist so; I'll witness that. But it 'minds me mightily of the way mammy *give* old Trailler the side of bacon, last week. She was a-sweepin' up the hath—the meat on the table; old Trailler jumps up, gethers the bacon and darts; mammy arter him with the broomstick as fur as the door, but seein' the dog has got the start, she shakes the stick at him, and hollers, 'You sassy, aig-sukkin', roguish, gnatty, flopped-eared varmint, take it along, take it along! I only wish 'twas full of a'snic and ox vomit and blue vitrul, so as 'twould cut your intrils into chitlins!' That's about the way you give Bunch to Simon."

It was evident to our hero that his father intended he should remain but one more night beneath the paternal roof. What mattered it to Simon?

He went home at night, curried and fed Bunch; whispered confidentially in his ear, that he was the "fastest piece of hoss-flesh, accordin' to size, that ever shaded the yearth;" and then busied himself in preparing for an early start on the morrow.

VII.

MY FIRST VISIT TO PORTLAND.*

In the fall of the year 1829, I took it into my head I'd go to Portland. I had heard a good deal about Portland, what a fine place it was, and how the folks got rich there proper fast; and that fall there was a couple of new papers come up to our place from there, called the "Portland Courier," and "Family Reader," and they told a good many queer kind of things, about Portland and one thing another; and all at once it popped into my head, and I up and told father, and sais:

"I am going to Portland whether or no; and I'll see what this world is made of yet."

* By Zeba Smith.

Father stared a little at first, and said he was afraid I would get lost; but when he see I was bent upon it, he give it up, and he stepped to his chist, and opened the till, and took out a dollar, and gave to me; and says he:

"Jack, this is all I can do for you; but go and lead an honest life, and I believe I shall hear good of you yet."

He turned and walked across the room, but I could see the tears start into his eyes. And mother sat down, and had a hearty crying spell.

This made me feel rather bad for a minit or two, and I almost had a mind to give it up; and then again father's dream came into my mind, and I mustered up courage, and declared I'd go. So I tackeled up the old horse, and packed in a load of axe-handles, and a few notions; and mother fried me some doughnuts, and put 'em into a box, along with some cheese and sassages, and ropped me up another shirt, for I told her I didn't know how long I should be gone. And after I got all rigged out, I went round, and bid all the neighbors good-bye, and jumped in, and drove off for Portland.

Aunt Sally had been married two or three years before, and moved to Portland; and I inquired

round till I found out where she lived, and went there, and put the old horse up, and eat some supper, and went to bed.

And the next morning I got up, and straightened right off to see the editor of the "Portland Courier," for I knew, by what I had seen in his paper, that he was just the man to tell me which way to steer. And when I come to see him, I knew I was right; for soon as I told him my name, and what I wanted, he took me by the hand as kind as if he had been a brother, and says he:

"Mister," says he, "I'll do anything I can to assist you. You have come to a good town; Portland is a healthy, thriving place, and any man with a proper degree of enterprise may do well here. But," says he, "stranger," and he looked mighty kind of knowing, says he, "if you want to make out to your mind, you must do as the steam-boats do."

"Well," says I, "how do they do?" for I didn't know what a steam-boat was any more than the man in the moon.

"Why," says he, "they go ahead. And you must drive about among the folks here, just as

tho' you were at home, on the farm among the cattle. Don't be afraid of any of them, but figure away; and, I dare say, you'll get into good business in a very little while. But," says he, "there's one thing you must be careful of; and that is, not to get into the hands of them are folks that trades up round Hucklers' Row, for there's some sharpers up there, if they get hold of you, would twist your eye-teeth out in five minits."

Well, arter he had gin me all the good advice he could, I went back to Aunt Sally's agin, and got some breakfast; and then I walked all over the town, to see what chance I could find to sell my axe-handles, and things, and to get into business.

After I had walked about three or four hours, I come along towards the upper end of the town, where I found there were stores and shops of all sorts and sizes. And I met a feller, and says I:

"What place is this?"

"Why this," says he, "is Hucklers' Row."

"What," says I, "are these the stores where the traders in Hucklers' Row keep?"

And says he: "Yes."

Well then, says I to myself, I have a pesky good mind to go in and have a try with one of these chaps, and see if they can twist my eye-teeth out. If they can get the best end of a bargain out of me, they can do what there ain't a man in our place can do; and I should just like to know what sort of stuff these ere Portland chaps are made of. So in I goes into the best-looking store among 'em. And I see some biscuit lying on the shelf, and says I:

"Mister, how much do you ax a piece for them are biscuits?"

"A cent a piece," says he.

"Well," says I, "shan't give you that, but if you've a mind to I'll give you two cents for three of them, for I begin to feel a little as tho' I would like to take a bite."

"Well," says he, "I wouldn't sell 'em to anybody else so, but seeing it's you, I don't care if you take 'em."

I knew he lied, for he never seen me before in his life. Well, he handed down the biscuits, and I took 'em, and walked round the store a while, to see what else he had to sell. At last, says I:

"Mister, have you got any good cider?"

Says he "Yes, as good as ever ye see."

"Well," says I, "what do you ax a glass for it?"

"Two cents," says he.

"Well," says I, "seems to me I feel more dry than I do hungry now. Ain't you a mind to take these ere biscuits again and give me a glass of cider?" and says he:

"I don't care if I do."

So he took and laid 'em on the shelf again, and poured out a glass of cider. I took the cider and drinkt it down, and to tell the truth, it was capital good cider. Then says I:

"I guess it's time for me to be agoing," and I stept along towards the door; but says he:

"Stop, Mister, I believe you haven't paid me for the cider."

"Not paid you for the cider!" says I; "what do you mean by that? didn't the biscuits that I give you just come to the cider?"

"Oh, ah, right!" says he.

So I started to go again, and says he:

"But stop, Mister, you didn't pay me for the biscuit."

"What?" says I, "do you mean to impose upon me? do you think I am going to pay you for the biscuits and let you keep them too? Ain't they there now on your shelf? What more do you want? I guess, Sir, you don't whittle me in that way."

So I turned about and marched off, and left the feller staring and scratching his head as tho' he was struck with a dunderment.

Howsomever, I didn't want to cheat him, only jest to show 'em it wan't so easy a matter to pull my eye-teeth out; so I called in next day, and paid him two cents. Well, I stayed at Aunt Sally's a week or two, and I went about town every day to see what chance I could find to trade off my axe-handles, or hire out, or find some way or other to begin to seek my fortune.

And I must confess the editor of the "Courier" was about right in calling Portland a pretty good thriving sort of a place; everybody seemed to be as busy as so many bees, and the masts of the vessels stuck up round the wharves as thick as pine-trees in Uncle Joshua's pasture, and the stores and the shops were so thick, it seemed as if there was no end to them. In short, altho' I have been round

the world considerable, from that time to this, all the way from Madawaska to Washington, I've never seen any place yet, that I think has any business to grin at Portland.

VIII.

BILLY WARRICK'S COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

WARRICK IN DISTRESS.

Piney Bottom, in Old North State,
Jinuary this 4, 1844.

MR. PORTER,

Sir:—Bein' in grate distrest, I didn't know what to do, till one of the lawyers councilled me to tell you all about it, and git your apinion. You see I are a bin sparkin' over to one of our nabors a cortin' of Miss Barbry Bass, nigh upon these six munse. So t'other nite I puts on my stork that

cum up so high that I look'd like our Kurnel paradin of the milertary on Ginral Muster, tryin' to look over old Snap's years—he holds sich a high hed when he knows that he's got on his holdsturs and pistuls and his trowsen and sich like, for he's a mity proud hoss. I had on a linun shurt koller starched stif that cum up monstrus high rite under my years, so that ev'ry time I turn'd my hed it nigh saw'd off my years, and they are so sore that I had to put on some Gray's intment, which draw'd so hard, that if I hadn't wash'd it in sope-suds I *do* bleve it would a draw'd out my branes. I put on my new briches that is new fashon'd and opens down before, and it tuck me nigh a quarter of a houre to butten 'em, and they had straps so tite I could hardly bend my kneas—I had on my new wastecoat and a dicky bussam with ruffles on each side, and my white hat. I had to be perticlar nice in spittin' my terbaccer juce, for my stork were so high I had to jerk back my head like you have seed one of them Snapjack bugs. Considrin' my wiskurs hadn't grow'd out long enuff, as I were conceety to think that I look'd middlin' *peart*, and my old nigger 'oman Venus said I look'd nice enuff for a Bryde.

It tuck one bale of good cotting and six bushils of peese to pay for my close. Dod drot it, it went sorter hard; but when I tho't how putty she *did* look last singin' school day,—with her eyes as blue as indiger, and her teath white as milk, and sich long curlin' hare hanging clear down to her belt ribbun, and sich butiful rosy chaeks, and lips as red as a cock Red-burd in snow time, and how she squeased my hand when I gin her a oringe that I gin six cents for—I didn't grudge the price.

Mr. Porter—when I got to old Miss Basses bars, jist after nite, sich streaks and cold fits cum over me worse than a feller with the Buck agur, the furst time he goes to shute at a dear. My kneas got to trimblin', and I could hardly holler "get out" to Miss Basses son Siah's dog, old Troup, who didn't know me in my new geer, and cum out like all creashun a barkin' amazin'. Ses I to myself, ses I, what a fool you is—and then I thort what Squire Britt's nigger man, Tony, who went to town last week, told me about a taler there, who sed that jist as soon he got thru a makin' a sute of close for a member of assembly to go to Rawley in, he 'spected to come out a cortin' of Miss Barbry. This sorter raised my dander—for he's shockin' likely,

with black wiskurs 'cept he's nock-nead—with his hare all comded to one side like the Chapel Hill boys and lawyers. Then I went in, and after howdy'ing and shakin' hands, and sorter squeasin' of Barbry's, I sot down. There was old Miss Bass, Barbry and Siah Bass, her brother, a monstrus hand at possums—old Kurnel Hard, a goin to cort and stopp'd short to rite old Miss Basses will, with Squire Britt and one of the nabors to witness it all rite and strate. This kinder shock'd me—till Kurnel Hard, a mighty perlite man, sed, ses he:

"Mr. Warrick, you are a lookin' oncommon smart."

"Yes," ses I, "Kurnel, (a sorter cuttin' my eye at Barbry) middlin' well in body—but in mind—"

"Ah, I see," ses he, (cuttin' of my discoorse) "I understand that you are"—(Mr. Porter, I forget the dixonary words he sed but it were that I were in *love*). If you *could* have seed my face and felt it burne, you *would* a tho't that you had the billyous fever; and as for Barbry, now want she red as a turkey-cock's gills—and she gump'd up and said, "Ma'am," and run outer the room, tho' nobody on yearth that I heerd on called her; and then I

heerd Polly Cox—drot her pictur!—who is hired to weeve—a sniggrin' at me.

Arter a while, Squire Britt and the nabor went off—and Siah he went a coonin' of it with his dogs, but driv old Troup back, for he's deth on rabbits; and old Miss Bass went out, and Kurnal Hard, arter taken a drink outen his cheer-box, he got behin' the door and shuck'd himself and got into one of the beds in the fur eend of the room.

Arter a while, old Miss Bass cum back, and sot in the chimbly corner and tuck off her shoes, and then tuck up her pipe and went to smokin'—the way she rowl'd the smoke out was astonishin'—and ev'ry now and then she struck her head and sorter gron'd like, what it were at I don't know, 'cept she were bothered 'bout her consarns—or thinkin' 'bout her will which she had jist sined. Bimeby Barbry cum back, and sot on a cheer clost by me. She was a workin' of a border that looked mity fine.

Ses I, "Miss Barbry, what is that that you're seamstring so plaguy putty?"

Ses she, "It teent nothin'."

Up hollered old Miss Bass:

"Why," ses she, "Mr. Warrick, it's a *nite-cap,* and what on the Lord's yearth young peple now-a-days works, and laces, and befrils nite-caps fur, *I* can't tell—it beets me—bedizinin' out their heads when they're gwain to bed, just as if anybody but their own peple seed 'em; and there's young men with wiskurs on there upper lip; it want so in my day, but young people's got no sense—bless the Lord! oh me—"

"Lord, mammy," ses Barbry, "do hush."

"Ses old Miss Bass, "I shaan't—for it's the nat'ral truth."

Miss Barbry then begun a talkin' with me 'bout the fashuns, when I were in town, but old Miss Bass broke in, and ses she:

"Yes, they tells me that the gals in town has injun-rubber things blowed up and ties aroun' there wastes, and makes 'em look bigger behin' than afore—for all the world like an 'oman was sorter in a curous way behind."

Thinks I, what's comin' next—when old Miss Bass, knockin' the ashes outer her pipe, gethered up her shuse and went off. Then Barbry blushed and begun talkin' 'bout the singin' meetin', and kinder teched me up 'bout bein' fond of sparkin' Dicey Loomis—jist to see how I'd take it.

"Well," ses I, "she's 'bout the likeliest gal in this settlement, and I rekon mity nigh the smartest; they tells me she kin spin more cuts in a day, and card her own rolls, and danse harder and longer, and sings more songs outer the Missunary Harmony, than any gal in the country."

You see, Mr. Porter, I tho't I'd size her pile.

Ses she, sorter poutin' up and jist tossin' her head, "If them's your sentiments why don't you cort her? For my part, I knows sev'ral young ladies that's jist as smart, and can sing as many songs, and dance as well, and as for her bein' the prettiest, Laws a mersy! sher—you shouldn't judge for me sposin' *I* was a man!"

I thot I'd come agin, but was sorter feard of runnin' the thing in the groun'. Then I drawd up my cheer a leetle closer, and were jist about to talk to the spot, when I felt choky, and the trimbles tuck me oncommon astonishin'.

Ses Barbry, lookin' rite up in my face, and 'sorter quiv'rin' in her talk, ses she, "Mr. Warrick, goodness gracious! *what does* ale you?"

Ses I, hardly abel to talk, "It's that drotted three-day agur I cotch'd last fall a clearin' in the new grouns; I raly bleve it will kill me, but it makes no odds, daddy and mammy is both ded, and

I'm the only one of six as is left, and nobody would kear."

Ses she, lookin' rite mornful, and holdin' down her hed, "Billy, what *does* make you talk so? you auter know that there's *one* that would kear and greve too."

Ses I, peartin' up, "I should like to know if it ar an 'oman; for if it's any gal that's 'spectable and creddittable, I could love her like all creashun. Barbry," ses I, takin' of her hand, "ain't I many a time, as I sot by the fire at home, all by my lone self, ain't I considered how if I *did* have a good wife how I could work for her, and do all I could for her, and make her pleasant like and happy, and do ev'rything for her?" Well, Barbry she look'd up to me, and seem'd so mornful and pale, and tears in her sweet eyes, and pretendin' she didn't know I held her hand, that I could not help sayin': "Barbry, if that sumbody that keared was only *you,* I'd die for you, and be burry'd a dozen times."

She trimbl'd, and look'd so pretty, and sed nothin', I couldn't help kissin' her; and seein' she didn't say "quit," I kissed her nigh on seven or eight times; and as old Miss Bass had gone to bed,

and Kurnel Hard was a snorin' away, I want perticillar, and I spose I kiss'd her too loud, for jist as I kissed her the last time, out hollered old Miss Bass:

"My lord! Barbry, old Troup is in the milk-pan! I heard him smackin' his lips a lickin' of the milk. Git out, you old varmint!—git out!"

Seein' how the gander hopped, I jumped up, and hollered: "Git out, Troup, you old raskel!" and opened the door to make bleve I let him out.

As for Barbry, she laffed till she was nigh a bustin' a holdin' in, and run out; and I heerd Kurnel Hard's bed a shakin' like he had my three-day agur. Well, I took tother bed, after havin' to pull my britches over my shuse, for I couldn't unbutton my straps.

Next mornin' I got up airly, and Siah axed me to stay to breakfast, but I had to feed an old cow at the free pastur, and left. Jist as I got to the bars, I meets old Miss Bass, and ses she, "Mr. Warrick, next time you see a dog a lickin' up milk, don't let him do it loud enuff to wake up ev'rybody in the house—perticerlar when there's a stranger 'bout."

And Barbry sent me word that she's so shamed

that she never kin look me in the face agin, and never to come no more.

Mr. Porter, what shall I do? I feel oncommon sorry and distrest. Do write me. I seed a letter from N. P. Willis tother day in the Nashunal Intelligensur where he sed he had a hedake on the top of his pen; I've got it at both eends, for my hands is crampped a writin,' and my hart akes. Do write me what to do.

No more at pressence, but remane

WM. WARRICK.

CHAPTER II.

WARRICK IN LUCK.

"I'd orfen heerd it said ob late,
Dat Norf Carolina was de state,
Whar han'some boys am bound to shine,
Like Dandy Jim of de Caroline," &c.

Piney Bottom, in Old North State,
March 21, this 1844.

MR. PORTER,

I rode three mile evry Satterdy to git a letter outer the Post Offis, spectin' as how you had writ

me a anser; but I spose what with Pineter dogs, and hosses, and Kricket, and Boxin', and Texas, Trebla, and three Fannys, and Acorns, and Punch in perticlar, you hain't had no time. I'm glad your *Speerit* is revivin'; so is mine, and, as the boy sed to his mammy, I hopes to be better acquainted with you.

Well, I got so sick in my speerits and droopy like, that I thot I should ev died stone ded, not seein' of Barbry for three weeks. So one evenin' I went down, spectin' as how old Miss Bass had gone to Sociashun—for she's mity religus, and grones shockin' at prayers—to hear two prechers from the Sanwitch Ilans, where they tell me the peple all goes naked—which is comikil, as factry homespun is cheap, and could afford to kiver themselves at nine cent a yard.

When I went in, there sot old Miss Bass and old Miss Collis a-smokin' and chattin amazin'. I *do* think old Miss Collis beats all natur at smokin'.

Old Miss Collis had on her Sundy frock, and had it draw'd up over her kneas to keep from skorchin', and her pettykoats rased tolerble high as she sot over the fire to be more comfortabler like, but when she seed me she drop'd 'em down,

and arter howd'ying and civerlizin' each other I sot down, but being sorter flusticated like, thinkin' of that skrape, last time I was here, about old Troup lickin' of the milk, I didn't notis perticlar where I sot. So I sot down in a cheer where Barbry had throw'd down her work (when she seed me comin' at the bars) and run—and her nedle stuck shockin' in my—into *me*, and made me jump up oncommon and hollered!

I thought old Miss Collis woulder split wide open a laffin', and old Miss Bass like to a busted, and axed my parding for laffin', and I had to give in, but it was laffin' on t'other side, and had to rub the place.

Arter awhile we got done—but it looked like I had bad luck, for in sittin' down agin I lik'd to have sot on Barbry's tom cat, which if I had, I shoulder bin like Kurnel Zip Coon's wife, who jump'd into a holler log to mash two young panters to deth, and they scratched her so bad she couldn't set down for two munse! I seed this 'ere in a almynack. Old Miss Bass seein' I was bothered, axed me to have a dram, but I thank'd her, no.

Ses she, "Mr. Warrick, you ain't one of the Temprite Siety ?"

Ses I, "No, but I hain't got no 'casion at presence !"

Ses she, "You is welcome."

Well, we chatted on some time 'bout prechin, and mumps, and the measly oitment, and Tyler gripes, and Miss Collis she broke out and sed :

"I never *did* hear the beat of them Tyler gripes ! I have hearn talk of all sorter gripes, and dry gripes, and always thought that the gripes was in the stomic, before now, but bless your soul, Miss Bass, this here gripes is in the hed ! I told my old man that no good would come of 'lectin' Tyler, but poor old creeter, he's sorter hard-headed, and got childish, and would do it. O ! me ? well, we're all got to come to it and leve this world ! Bless the Lord ! I hope I'm ready !"

"That's a fact," ses old Miss Bass, "you're right, Miss Collis ; old men gits uncommon stubborn ; a hard, mighty hard time, I had with my old man. But he's ded and gone ! I hope he's happy !"

And they both groaned and shet their eyes, and pucked up their mouths.

Ses she, "He got mity rumitys and troubled me powerful, and the old creetur tuck astonishin' of dokter's stuff, and aleckcampane and rose of sublimit—but he went at last! The Lord's will be done!—*Skat!* you stinkin' hussy, and come out of that kibbard!" ses she to the cat; "I *do* think cats is abominable, and that tom cat of Barbry's is the 'scheviousest cat I ever *did* see!"

Ses Miss Collis, "Cats *is* a pest, but a body can't do well without 'em; the mice would take the house bodily," ses she. "Miss Bass, they tell me that Dicey Loomis is a-gwying to be married—her peple was in town last week, and bort a power of things and artyfishals, and lofe sugar, and ribbuns, and cheese, and sich like!"

"Why," ses Miss Bass, "you don't tell me so! Did I ever hear the beat o' that! Miss Collis, are it a fact?"

"Yes," ses Miss Collis, "it's the nat'ral truth, for brother Bounds tell'd it to me at last class meetin'."

Ses Miss Bass, hollerin' to Barbry in t'other room: "Barbry, do you hear that Dicey Loomis is gwying to git married? Well! well! it beats me! bless the Lord! I wonder who she's gwying to get married to, Miss Collis?"

Ses Miss Collis, "Now, child, yure too hard for me! but they do say it's to that Taler from Town. Well, he's a putty man, and had on such a nice dress—'cept he's most too much nock nead, *sich* eyes and *sich* whiskers, and now *don't* he play the fiddle?"

Ses Miss Bass, "Well, Dicey is a middlin' peart gal, but for my part I don't see what the taler seed in *her*."

"Nor I nuther," ses Miss Collis, "but she's gwine to do well. I couldn't a sed no if he'd a axed for our Polly."

Then in comes Barbry, and we how-dy'd and both turned sorter red in the face, and I trimbl'd tolerable and felt agurry. Well, arter we talk'd a spell, all of us, Miss Bass got up and ses she:

"Miss Collis I want to show you a nice passel of chickens; our old speckled hen come off with eleven, yisterdy, as nice as ever you *did* see."

Then old Miss Collis riz up, and puttin' her hands on her hips, and stratened like, and ses, right quick:

"Laws a massy! my poor back! Drat the rumatics! It's powerful bad; it's gwyne to rain, I know!—oh, me! me!"—and they both went out.

Then Barbry look'd at me so comikil and sed:

"Billy, I raly *shall* die thinkin' of you and old Troup!" and she throw'd herself back and laffed and laffed; and she looked so putty and so happy ses I to myself:

"Billy Warrick, you must marry that gal and no mistake, or brake a trace!" and I swore to it.

Well, we then talk'd agreeable like, and sorter saft, and both of us war so glad to see one another till old Miss Bass and Miss Collis come back; and bimeby Miss Collises youngest son come for her, and I helped her at the bars to get up behin' her son, and ses she:

"Good-bye, Billy! Good luck to you! I know'd your daddy and mammy afore you was born on yerth, and I was the fust one after your granny that had you in the arms—me and Miss Bass *talk'd it over! you'll git a smart, peart, likely gal!* So good-bye, Billy."

Ses I, "Good-bye, Miss Collis," and ses I, "Gooly, take good kear of your mammy, my son!"

You see I thot I'd be perlite.

Well, when I went back, there sot old Miss Bass, and ses she:

"Billy, Miss Collis and me is a bin talkin' over you and Barbry, and seein' you are a good karickter and smart, and well to do in the world, and a poor orphin boy, I shan't say *no!* Take her, Billy, and be good to her, and God bless you, my son, for I'm all the mammy you've got," so she kiss'd me, and ses she, "now kiss Barbry. We've talk'd it over, and leave us for a spell, for it's hard to give up my child."

So I kissed Barbry, and left.

The way I rode home was oncommon peart, and my old mare pranced and was like the man in Skriptur, who "waxed fat and kick'd," and I hurried home to tell old Venus, and to put up three shotes and some turkies to fatten for the innfare. Mr. Porter, it's to be the third Wensday in next month, and Barbry sends you a ticket, hopin' you will put it in your paper—that is, the weddin'.

So wishin' you a heap of subskribers, I remane in good helth and speerits at presence.

Your Friend,

WM. WARRICK.

CHAPTER III.

WARRICK'S WEDDING.

Described in a letter by an "old flame" of his.

Piney Bottom, this July 9, of 1844.

MISS POLLY STROUD,

Dere Maddam.—I now take my pen in hand of the presence oppertunity to let you know how we are all well, but I am purry in sperits hopin' this few lines may find you the same by gods mercy as I have been so mortfiyde I could cry my eyes out bodily. Bill Warrick, yes Bill Warrick, is married to Barbry Bass! I seed it done—a mean triflin; deceevinist creetur—but never mind—Didn't I know him when we went to old field skool—a little raggid orflin Boy, with nobody to patch his close torn behin a makin of a dicky-dicky-dout of himself—cause his old nigger oman Venus was too lazy to mend 'em? Didn't I know him when he couldn't make a pot hook or a hanger in his copy book to save his life, as for makin of a S he always put it tother way, jist so ꟾ backwards. And then

to say I were too old for him, and that he always conceited I was a sort of a sister to him! O Polly Stroud, he is *so* likely, perticlar when he is dressed up of a Sunday or a frolick—and what is worser his wife is prutty too, tho I don't acknowlige it here. Only too think how I doated on him, how I used to save bosim blossoms for him, which some people call sweet sentid shrubs—and how I used to put my hand in an pull them out for him, and how I used to blush when he sed they was sweeter for comin' from where they did? Who went blackberryin' and huckleberryin' with me? who always rode to preechun with me and helped me on the hos? who made Pokebery stains in dimons and squares and circles and harts and so on at quiltins for me?—and talkin' of Poke—I do hope to fathers above that Poke will beat Clay jist to spite Bill, for he is a rank distracted Whig and secreterry to the Clay Club — who always threaded my nedle and has kissed me in perticler, in playin' of kneelin' to the wittyist, bowin' to the puttyist, and kissin' of them you love best, and play in Sister Feebe, and Oats, Peas-Beans and Barley grows—at least one hundred times? Who wated as candil holder with me at Tim Bolins weddin', and sed he knowd one

in the room hed heap rather marry, and looked at me so oncommon, and his eyes so blue that I felt my face burn for a quarter of a hour? who I *do* say was it but Bill Warrick?—yes, and a heap more! If I haven't a grate mind to sue him, and would do it, if it wasn't I am feared hed show a Voluntine I writ to him Feberary a year ago. He orter be exposed, for if ever he is a widderer hell fool somebody else the same way he did me. It's a burnin' shame, I could hardly hold my head up at the weddin'. If I hadnt of bin so mad and too proud to let him see it I could cried severe.

Well, it was a nice weddin'; sich ice-cakes and minicles, and raisins, and oringis and hams, flour doins and chickin fixins, and four oncommon fattest big goblers rosted I ever seed.

The Bryde was dressed in a white muslin figgured over a pink satin pettycote, with white gloves and satin shoes, and her hair a curlin' down with a little rose in it, and a chain aroun her neck. I don't know whether it was raal gool or plated. She looked butiful, and Bill did look nice, and all the candydates and two preechers and Col. Hard was there, and Bills niggers, the likeliest nine of

them you ever looked at, and when I did look at em and think, I raly thought I should or broke my heart.

Well, sich kissin'—several of the gals sed that there faces burnt like fire, for one of the preechers and Col. Hard wosn't shaved clost.

Bimeby I was a sittin' leanin' back, and Bill he come behin me and sorter jerked me back, and skeared me powerful for fear I was fallin' backwards, and I skreamed and kicked up my feet before to ketch like, and if I hadn t a had on pantalets I reckon somebody would of knowd whether I gartered above my knees or not. We had a right good laff on old Parson Brown as he got through a marryin' of em—says he:

"I pronounce you, William Warrick and Barbry Bass, man and oman,"—he did look so when we laffed, and he rite quick sed—"man and wife—salute your Bryde," and Bill looked horrid red, and Barbry trimbled and blushed astonishin' severe.

Well, it's all over, but I don't keer—there's as good fish in the sea as ever come outen it. I'm not poor for the likes of Bill Warrick, havin' now three sparks, and one of them from Town,

whose got a good grocery and leads the Quire at church, outer the Suthern Harmony, the Missonry Harmony is gone outer fashion.

Unkle Ben's oldest gal Suky is gwine to marry a Virginny tobacker roler, named Saint George Drummon, and he says he is a kin to Jack Randolf and Pokerhuntus, who they is the Lord knows. Our Jack got his finger cut with a steal trap catchin' of a koon for a Clay Club, and the boys is down on a tar raft, and ole Miss Collis and mammy is powerful rumatic, and the measly complaint is amazin! I jist heard you have got two twins agin—that limestone water must be astonishin' curyous.

What is the fashuns in Tennysee, the biggest sort of Bishups is the go here. My love to your old man,

Your friend,

NANCY GUITON.

To Miss Polly Stroud,
Nigh Noxvil in the State of Tennysee,
Close by where the French Broad and Holsin jines.

Old Miss Collis and mammy is jist come home.

Betsy Bolin is jist had a fine son and they say she is a doin' as well as could be expected, and the huckleberry crop is short on account of the drouth.

IX.

OUR TOWN.*

I SPENT a summer in the Eastern States, for the purpose of studying Yankee character, and picking up such peculiarities of dialect and expression as I could, from constant communication with the "critters" themselves. In Boston, I was thus invited by a countryman to visit the town in which he lived.

"Wal, stranger, can't you come down our way, and give us a show?"

"Where do you live?" inquired I.

"Oh, abeout half way between this ere and sunrise."

* By G. H Hill.

"Oh, yes," said I, adopting at once the style of the countryman, "I know; where the trees grow under-ground, and galls weigh two hundred pounds. Where some on 'em are so fat, they grease the cart-wheels with their shadow, and some on 'em so thin, you're obliged to look at 'em twice afore you can see 'em at all."

"Wal, I guess you've been there," says he, saying which, the countryman departed.

X.

"FALLING OFF A LOG," IN A GAME OF "SEVEN UP."

"Hoss and hoss!"

"Yes; 'hoss and hoss,' and my deal!"

"I'll double the bet and have the whole bottle or none."

"Let me cut, and I'll stand it."

"S'pose we both take a *little* drink first," said Chunkey.

"No: darned if I do! thar ain't enough for us both—if I win I'll drink it, and you must wait till a boat comes, if you die! If you win, I'll wait, if I die!"

Such was the conversation between Jim and

Chunkey, as they were sitting across a log on the banks of the Yazoo River, surrounded by a cloud of musquitoes, playing "seven-up" for a remaining bottle of whisky, which was not enough for the two, and "wouldn't set one forward" *much*. They were just returning from Bear Creek, in Township 17, Range 1, where they had some hands deadening timber, preparatory to opening a plantation in the Fall. They had sent the negroes to the river to take a steamboat, whilst they, with their furniture, and the remains of a forty-two gallon "red-head," came down Deer Creek in a day, out into False Lake, through False Lake into Wasp Lake, and down that to where it empties into the Yazoo, and here on the banks of that river our scene opens.

"Go ahead, then," said Chunkey, "shuffle, deal, and win, if you can, but take out that Jack what's torn!"

I took the Jack out, shuffled, dealt, and at it we went. Chunkey looked mighty scared; his eye was sorter oneasy, and dartin' about, and he seemed to be choked as he kept tryin' to swaller somethin'—the long beard on his face looked powerful black, or else his face looked powerful white, one or

the 'yether. We both played mighty slow and careful. The first hand I made "high, low," and Chunkey "game;" the second hand I made "low, Jack," and Chunkey "high, game."

"Four to three," says I.

"Yes, and my deal," said Chunkey.

He gin 'em the Sunflower "shuffle," and I the Big Greasy "cut," and pushed 'em back. Chunkey dealt 'em mighty slow, and kept tryin' to see my cards, but I laid my hand on 'em as fast as they fell on the log, to prevent him from seein' the marks. He turned up the Ace of Clubs. When I looked at my hand, thar was the King, Jack, Nine, and Deuce,—I led my King—

"High!" says I.

"Low!" said Chunkey, poppin' down the Tray.

"Not edzactly," said I, hawlin' in the trick, and leadin' the Deuce, and jist as I done so, I seed Chunkey starin' over my shoulder, lookin' wilder nor a dyin' bar. I never seed a man look so awful in my life. I thought he were gwine to have a fit.

"Ya, ya!" said he, "fallin' off the log," cryin' "*Snake! snake!*"

I never took time to look, but made a big

he-spring about twenty feet in the cane, the har on my head standin' stiff as bristles and ratlin' like a raftsman's bones, with the Sky lake ager, and the bad feelins runnin' down to my toes. I reckon you never seed a man so frightened of snakes as I is, and I've been so all my life; I'd rather fight the biggest bar in the swamp with his own weapons, teeth and claws, takin it rough and tumble, dependin' on my mind and knowledge of a bar's character, than come in contact with a big rusty highland mocassin or rattlesnake, and that's the reason I never hunts in the summer time. When I lived up on Deer Creek, thar was a perfect cord of all sorts, and I used to wear all summer the thickest kind of cow-hide boots, reachin' up to my hips, and I *never* went into the field, 'ceptin on a mule, with a double-barrelled gun at that. This, Chunkey knowed; and whenever he seed one he gin me warnin'. Chunkey ain't afraid of snakes; he'd jist as soon eat of a gourd with a snake, as not, if the snake would help himself and not meddle with his licker.

Well, arter lookin' about a spell I couldn't see no snake-sign, and I then hollered to Chunkey, but darned a word did he say. It then flashed across

my mind that as Chunkey fell on the side of the log whar the licker lay, he *might* sorter taste it, as he were dry enough to be able to swaller a little at a time; so I struck a lick back to the log and looked over, and thar he lay, jist curled up like a 'coon in the sunshine, *and the bottle jist glued to his lips,* and the licker runnin' down his throat like a storm! darn him, I hadden't no time to think afore I bounced at him! I struck across his snout, and he nailed my thumb in his jaws, and rostled up a handful of dirt and throwed it in my eyes, and that sot me to gwine, and I throwed the licks into him right and left, and I made the fur fly, *I tell you;* but Chunkey stood it like a man! Darned the word did he say; he wouldn't holler, he was *perfectly game!*

"No, that's a fact! I didn't holler; I didn't have time; while you were working away on that gum-knot, I were standin' up agin a little dog-wood finishin' the licker!"

"How comes it that you never wrung in that part of the story about the knot before?"

"'Cause, I'd done got the licker, and I was satisfied; you thought you'd gin me some mighty big licks, and you was satisfied; and it would have

been mean in me to crow over you then: you was out of licker, tobacco, and had your fist all skinned and beat as soft as a bar's foot! Oh no, Jim, I'm reasonable, *I is.*"

"Well, *go along;* if I don't set you to gnawin' somethin' harder than that knot afore long, then my name ain't nothin' to me, and I don't car for nobody, that's all."

"All sot," says Chunkey, "let's licker. You wanted to know what '*fallin off a log*' meant, and I thought I'd show you; but, my honey, I'll jist let you know if you'd a hit *me* any of them licks what you struck 'right and left' into that knot, I'd a gin you a touch of panter fistcuffs—a sort of cross of the scratch on the bite—and a powerful strong game it is, in a close fight. Come, gents, let's licker, and then I can beat any man that wars har, for a mighty nice chunk of a poney, at any game of short cards:

Oh, the waggoner was a mighty man, a mighty man was he:
He'd pop his whip, and stretch his chains, and holler 'wo, gee!'"

XI.

A YANKEE CARD-TABLE.*

WHEN I was about leaving New Orleans, standing upon the Levee, waiting for my luggage, I was thus addressed by a long, lean, down-Easter:

"Say yeou, which of these things slips up fust?"

"What?" said I.

"Which of these things slips up fust?"

"Do you mean which steamboat goes up the river first?"

"Yes, I'll be darned if I don't."

That one," said I pointing to the nearest.

* By G. H. Hill.

"I'm in an awful hurry to git eout of this. It is so thundering hot, and I smell the yeller fever all reound."

This individual had a very intellectual forehead, measuring about an inch and a quarter in height, and punched in at the sides to match. His eyes were set deep in their sockets, and something like a pig's, only the colour was not as good. His nose pushed boldly out, as it started from the lower part of his forehead, as though it meant to be something, but when it had reached half its destination, it bent suddenly in like a parrot's beak. His upper lip was long and thin, and was stretched on a sort of rack, which was made by a couple of supernumerary teeth, which stuck out very prominently. His chin, too modest to attempt a rivalry with his projecting lip, receded backwards towards the throat, so that, to look at him in front, you did not perceive that he had any chin at all. His hair was very light and bristly. A snuff-coloured coat of domestic manufacture adorned the upper part of his person. It was an ancient affair. The velvet was worn from the collar in several places, but which was carefully patched with red flannel, being the nearest approach to the original colour of the collar that could be found in

his domestic menagerie of reserved rags. The buttons, which one would naturally look for at the bottom of the waist, had wandered up between his shoulders. The coat was remarkably long, extending from high up on the shoulders to the lower part of the calves of his legs. He was slightly round-shouldered, so that when he stood right up, a small lady might have found shelter in a rain storm in the vacancy left beween the coat and the back. His pants, to common observers, would have been called too short, but he denied this, averring that his legs were too long for his trowsers. On his arm hung an old-fashioned camblet cloak, with the lining of green baize hanging about a quarter of a yard below the edge of the camblet. He said this was no fault of the lining, anyhow; "it got wet, and t'other shrunk a leetle, but the lining stuck to it like blazes." The Yankee was exceedingly anxious to secure his passage by the first boat, and he sang out to some person:

"Say, yeou, where is the Captain of this consarn. Say, yeou, (to some one else,) I want the Captain. Look here, Nigger, show a feller the Captain. Look here, you black sarpint, don't stick out your lips at me. Wal, I swow, I'll give anybody three cents that will show me the Captain."

The Captain, hearing the noise, stepped forward, and told the Yankee if he wished to see the Captain, he was commander of the boat.

"Dew tell? Wal, I swan, you have got a kind of commanding way about you, that's a fact."

"What do you wish?" said the Captain."

"Wal, I want a bathe."

"Very well, jump into the river, there is plenty of water."

"I tell you, I want a bathe."

"Well, don't I tell you to jump in, you can swim across if you like; we shall not start just yet."

"I want a bathe to lie down in. Now do you know what I mean, darn you?"

"Oh, you want a berth?"

"Wal, darn you, didn't I say bathe? I know what I'm about, I guess."

"I will accommodate you as far as I can," said the Captain, "but I've nothing but a mattrass to offer, and that is upon the cabin floor."

"Dew tell."

"It is the only one that is vacant, and the cabin floor is covered with them, so you had better secure it at once."

"Wal, then, I guess I'd better turn right in."

I omitted to mention that he carried a valise in his hand. Some one rather impertinently asked him what he had in it.

"Wal," said he, "I don't know that it's any of your business, but I don't mind telling on you. There is two shirts, one clean, t'other dirty; a pair of pants about as good as new, only a leetle worn here and there, and a pair of pistols. D'ye want I should take 'em out and show you?"

When he went down to turn in, he put the valise under his head, wrapped his old cloak around him, and threw himself, as he said, "into the arms of omnibus." The mattrasses on the other side of him, were occupied by some rough Kentucky boatmen. In the middle of the night, these men got up and commenced playing cards. No table being handy, they made use of the back of our Yankee friend for one, and chalked the reckoning of the game upon the camblet cloak, which surrounded the body of the unconscious sleeper. They became interested in the game, and began to lay down their cards with a might of fist, and earnestness of manner, which soon roused up our sleeping friend. He attempted to rise, but was held down by one of the party, who exclaimed:

"Lie still, stranger, I've only got three to go and I hold the Jack."

"Never mind, I'm a most smothered here, but go ahead, darn you, play quick and I'll go you halves."

He according lay still, until they had finished their game, but whether the Kentucky gambler divided his gains with his table, was never satisfactorily ascertained.

XII.

DICK M'COY'S SKETCHES OF HIS NEIGHBOURS.

LAST summer, I determined to visit the battle-ground of the *Horse-Shoe,* to see if any vestiges remained of *Old Hickory's* great fight with the Indians of the Tallapoosa. Fond of all sorts of aquatic diversion, I concluded to take the river four or five miles above, and descend to the "Shoe," and I therefore employed an old crony of mine, Dick M'Coy, to take me down in a canoe. Dick lives on the bank, and has all the qualifications of an otter, for river explorations.

For some miles above the battle-ground, the river is a succession of shallows, broken every mile

or two by lovely patches of smooth, still water, generally bedecked with a green islet or two, around which the trout love to play. The banks are generally large, irregular hills, that look as if they were struggling to pitch themselves, with their huge pines, into the stream; but, once in a while, you find a level strip of alluvial in cultivation, or a beautiful and fertile declivity, shaded by magnificent poplars, beech-trees, and walnut. Now and then you may see the cabin of a squatter, stuck to the side of a hill, like a fungus against a wall; but, generally, the Tallapoosa retains the wild, pristine features of the days when the Creek hunted on its banks, or disported himself upon its waters. A little way out from the river, on either side, among the "hollows" formed by little creeks and smaller streams, live a people, half-agricultural, half-piscatorial—a sinewy, yellow-headed, whiskey-loving set. Those south of the river, are the inhabitants of "'Possum Trot," while those on the north are the citizens of "Turpentine." Dick M'Coy is a 'Possum-Trotter, a fishing fellow, fishy in his stories, but always *au fait* in regard to matters of settlement gossip.

Seated on a clap-board, a little aft of the centre of

the boat, and facing Dick, I was amused for several hours with his conversation, as we threaded the intricate passages of the shoals, now whizzing by and barely touching an ugly rock, now spinning round in a little whirlpool, like a tee-totum. The skill of my Palinurus, however, seemed equal to any emergency; and we alternately twisted and tumbled along, at the rate of two miles and a half an hour.

As we came into a small, deep sheet of water, Dick pointed with his paddle to a smoke issuing from among the trees, on the "Turpentine" side of the river, and remarked:

"Thar's whar our *lazy* man lives—Seaborn Brown."

"Ah! is he lazy much?"

"Powerful."

"As how?"

"Onct he went out huntin', and he was so lazy he 'cluded he wouldn't. So he laid down in the sand, close to the aidge of the water. It come on to rain like the devil, and I, seen him from t'other side, tho't he was asleep, and hollered to him.

"Ses I, 'it's rainin' like wrath, Seab, and why don't you git up?'

"Ses he, hollerin' back, 'I'm wet any how, and thar's no use.'

"After a little, the river begun to rise about five foot an hour, and I hollers to him agin.

"Ses I, 'Seaborn, the river's a-risin' on to your gun; the but's half way in the water now.'

"Ses he, hollerin' back, 'The water ain't gwine to hurt the wood part.'

"I waited a few minutes, and sung out:

"'Seaborn, you're half under water yourself, and your gun-lock is in the river!'

"Ses he, 'I never ketches cold, and thar's no load in the gun, and besides, she needs a washin' out.'

"And Squire," continued Dick, "the last I seen of him that day, he tuck a flask out of his pocket, *as he lay,* drinkt, ketcht some water in the flask, and drinkt again, *as he lay; and then throw'd his face back,* this way, like, *to keep the river out of his mouth and nose!*"

Amused at Dick's anecdote of his lazy neighbour, I solicited some information about the occupant of a cabin nearly in the water, on the 'Possum Trot side.

At the very door of the dwelling commenced a fish-trap dam; and on the trap stood a stalwart

fellow in a red flannel shirt, and pantaloons that were merely breeches—the legs being torn off entirely.

"Who's that?" I asked.

"Wait till we pass him, and I'll tell you."

We tumbled onward a few yards.

"That's Jim Ed'ards; *he loves cat-fish, some! Well,* he does! Don't do nothin' but ketch 'em. Some of the boys says he's got slimy all over, *like* unto a cat—don't know about that; all I know is, we ketcht one in the seine, that weighed over forty pounds. Thar was a *mocassin* tuk out of it longer than my arm. And nobody wouldn't have it then, but Jim. As we was goin' home, Jim a totin' the fish—ses I, 'Jim, you ain't a gwine to eat *that* cat, sure*ly*!'

"Ses he, 'Pshaw! that mocassin warn't nothin'.'

"Ses I, 'Jim, enny man that'll eat that cat, would eat a bull-frog.'

"And with that, he knocked me down and liked to a killed me: and that was the reason I didn't want to tell you about him twell we'd passed him."

As we neared a pretty little island, on which

were a house and two or three acres in cultivation :

"Thar," said Dick, "is Dock Norris's settle*ment*. I guess he won't '*play horse*' agin in a hurry. He claims 'Possum Trot for his beat, but we'd all rather he'd take Turpingtine."

"What game was that he played?" I asked.

"Oh! playin' horse. See, thar was a crowd of boys come down and kamped on Turpingtine side, to seine. They was but a little ways from the river—leastways thar camp-fire was—and between the river and it, is a pretty knoll, whar the river's left a pretty bed of white sand as big as a garden spot, and right at it the water's ten foot deep, and it's about the same from the top of the bluff to the water.

"A big, one-eyed fellow named Ben Baker, was at the head of the town crowd, and as soon as they'd struck a camp, Ben and his fellers, except one (a lad like), tuck the seine and went away down the river, fishin', and was gone a'most all day. Well, Dock bein' of a sharp, splinter-legged, mink-face feller, gits some of his boys, and goes over in the time, and they drinks all Ben's whiskey and most all his coffee, and eats up all his bacon-

meat—'sides bein' sassy to the boy. Arter a while here comes Ben and his kump'ny, back, wet and tired, and hungry. The boy told 'em Dock Norris and his crowd had eat and drunk up everything, and Ben's one eye shined like the ev'ning star.

"Whar's he?" axed Ben; and then he turned round and seed Dock and his boys, on thar all-fours squealin' and rearin', *playin' horse,* they called it, in that pretty sandy place. Ben went right in amongst 'em, and ses he, 'I'll play horse, too,' and then he came down to his all-fours, and here they had it, round and round, rearin', pitchin', and cavortin'! Dock was might'ly pleased that Ben didn't seem mad; but bime-by, Ben got him close to the bank, and then, in a minute, gethered him by the seat of his breeches and the har of the head and slung him twenty foot out in the current. About the time Dock ris, Ben had another of the crowd harnessed, and he throw'd *him* at *Dock!* Then he pitched another, and so on, twell he'd thrown 'em all in. You oughter 'a seen 'em swim to the shoals and take that bee-line for home!"

"Why didn't they turn on him and thrash him?" I asked.

"Oh, you see he was a great big fellow, weighed two hundred, and was as strong as a yoke of oxen; and you know, 'squire, most of the people is mighty *puny-like*, in the *Trot*. Well, *playin' horse* got broke up after that."

When the next clearing came into view, I inquired of M'Coy, whose it was.

"*Don't* you know, 'squire? Ain't you never *seen* him? Why, it's old Bill Wallis's place, and he's *our ugly man!* The whole livin', breathin' yeth ain't got the match to his picter! His mouth is split every way, and turned wrong-side out, and when he opens it, it's like spreadin' an otter trap to set it. The skin's constant a pealin' from his nose, and his eyes looks like they was just stuck on to his face with pins! He's got hardly any skin to shet his eyes with, and not a sign of *har* to that little! His years is like a wolf's, and his tongue's a'most allers hangin' out of his mouth! His whole face looks like it was half-roasted! Why, he's obleeged to stay 'bout home; the nabor women is afraid their babies 'ill be like him!"

Just after this last story, we reached a fall of two feet, over which Dick's plan was to descend bow-foremost, with a "ca-souse," as he expressed it.

But we ran upon a rock, the current swayed us round, and over we went, broad-side.

"This is an ugly scrape, Dick," said I, as soon as we got ashore.

"Yes, 'squire, but not so ugly as old Wallis; thar's nuthin but deth can eekal him. Howsever, less leave bailin' the boat twell mornin', and go and stay with old Billy to-night, and then you'll see for yourself."

So, instead of sleeping at the Horse-shoe, we spent the night with old Billy and his folks; and we had a rare time there, I assure you.

XIII.

KICKING A YANKEE.*

A VERY handsome friend of ours, who a few weeks ago was *poked* out of a comfortable office up the river, has betaken himself to Bangor, for a time, to recover from the wound inflicted upon his feelings by our "unprincipled and immolating administration."

Change of air must have had an instantaneous effect upon his spirits; for, from Galena, he writes us an amusing letter, which, among other things, tells us of a desperate quarrel that took place on board of the boat between a real live dandy tourist,

* By J. M. Field.

and a real live Yankee settler. The latter trod on the toes of the former; whereupon the former threatened to "Kick out of the cabin" the latter.

"You'll kick me out of this cabing?"

"Yes Sir, I'll kick you out of this cabin!"

"You'll kick *me*, Mr. *Hitchcock*, out of this cabing?"

"Yes, Sir, I'll kick *you*, Mr. Hitchcock!"

"Wal, I guess," said the Yankee, very coolly, after being perfectly satisfied that it was himself who stood in such imminent peril of assault—"I guess' since you talk of kicking, you've never heard me tell about old Bradley and my mare, there, to hum?"

"No, Sir, nor do I wish—"

"Wal, guess it won't set you back much, any how, as kicking's generally best to be considered on. You see old Bradley is one of these sanctimonious, long-faced hypocrites, who put on a religious suit every Sabbath morning, and with a good deal of screwing, manage to keep it on till after sermon in the afternoon; and as I was a Universalist, he allers picked me out as a subject for religious conversation—and the

darned hypocrite would talk about sacred things, without ever winking. Wal, he had an old roan mare that would jump over any fourteen-rail fence in Illinois, and open any door in my barn that hadn't a padlock on it. Tu or three times I found her in my stable, and I told Bradley about it, and he was 'very sorry'—'an unruly animal'—'would watch her,' and a hull lot of such things, all said in a very serious manner, with a face twice as long as Deacon Farrar's on Fast day. I knew all the time he was lying, and so I watched him and his old roan tu; and for three nights regular, old roan came to my stable about bed time, and just at daylight Bradley would come, bridle her, and ride off. I then just took my old mare down to a blacksmith's shop, and had some shoes made with 'corks' about four inches long, and had 'em nailed on to her hind feet. Your heels mister, ain't nuthing to 'em. I took her home, give her about ten feet halter, and tied her right in the centre of the stable, fed her well with oats about nine o'clock, and after taking a good smoke, went to bed, knowing that my old mare was a truth-telling animal, and that she'd give a good report of herself in the morning. I hadn't got

fairly to sleep before the old 'oman hunched me and wanted to know what on airth was the matter out at the stable.

"Says I, 'Go tu sleep, Peggy, it is nothing but Kate—she is kicking off flies, I guess!'

"Purty soon she hunched me again, and says she:

"'Mr. Hitchcock, du git up and see what in the world is the matter with Kate, for she is kicking most powerfully.'

"'Lay still, Peggy, Kate will take care of herself, I guess.'

"Wal, the next morning, about daylight, Bradley, with bridle in hand, cum to the stable, as true as the book of Genesis; when he saw the old roan's sides, starn, and head, he cursed and swore worse than you did, mister, when I came down on your toes. Arter breakfast that morning Joe Davis cum to my house, and says he:

"'Bradley's old roan is nearly dead—she's cut all to pieces and can scarcely move.'

"'I want to know,' says I, 'how on airth did it happen?'

"Now, Joe Davis was a member of the same church with Bradley, and whilst we were talk-

ing, up cum that everlastin' hypocrite, and says he:

"'Mr. Hitchcock, my old roan is ruined!'

"'Du tell,' says I.

"'She is cut all to pieces,' says he; 'do you know whether she was in your stable, Mr. Hitchcock, last night?'

"Wal, mister, with this I let out:

"'Do I *know* it?'—(the Yankee here, in illustration, made a sudden advance upon the dandy, who made way for him unconsciously, as it were)—'Do I know it? you no-souled, shad-bellied, squash-headed, old night-owl you!—you hay-hookin', corn-cribbin', fodder-fudgin', cent-shavin', whitlin'-of-nuthin' you!—Kate kicks like a mere dumb beast, but I've reduced the thing to a *science!*'" The Yankee had not ceased to advance, or the dandy, in his astonishment, to retreat; and now, the motion of the latter being accelerated by an apparent demonstration on the part of the former to "suit the action to the word," he found himself in the "social hall," tumbling backwards over a pile of baggage, and tearing the knees of his pants as he scrambled up, a perfect scream of laughter stunning him from all sides.

The defeat was total: a few moments afterwards he was dragging his own trunk ashore, while Mr. Hitchcock finished his story on the boiler deck.

XIV.

WHY MR. SELLUM DISPOSED OF THE HORSE.

A MATTER OF FACT STORY.

Mr. Sellum is a horse-jockey; that is, when he is not more profitably employed, he is not ashamed, so he says, to "try his fort'n in that very respectable callin'." He dropped in at Bailey's bazaar a few weeks since; and very soon after Sellum arrived, a superb-looking charger, mounted by a graceful rider, pranced up the court, and entered the arena, to be sold at public vendue.

"There he is, gents," said the auctioneer; "there he is! a splendid beast! Look at him, and judge for yourselves. There's an ear, a forearm, a nostril,

n eye for you! That animal, gentlemen, was knocked down' to a gentleman under the hammer, ss than three months ago, for two hundred and ghty dollars. But I am authorized to-day to sell at horse—let him bring more or less. He's a eauty; fine figure, splendid saddle-beast, natural ait fourteen miles to the hour, trots a mile in ' 42"; and altogether he's a great horse," which st remark no one could doubt, for he weighed leven hundred pounds. "How much am I offered r that beautiful beast ?" continued the auctioneer. Move him round the ring once, John. That's it; legant motion."

There the horse stopped short, and refused to udge an inch, though John buried the rowels to ie shoulder in his ribs.

"Give me a bid, gentlemen, if you please. The orse must be sold."

"Twenty dollars," was heard from one corner of ie room.

"*Twenty dollars!*" screamed the auctioneer, with seemingly ironical laugh. "I'm offered the stuendous sum of twenty dollars, gentlemen, for that orse. Are there no sausage-makers in this conregation ? I'm offered only twenty dollars! But,

as I said before, the horse is here to be sold, so I shall accept the bid. Twenty dollars. I'm offered twenty dollars—twenty—twenty—give me thirty? Twenty dollars — twenty — did I hear thirty? Twenty dollars—give *five?* Twenty dollars—say *one*? Shall I have twenty-one? If that's the best bid, down he must go, gentlemen! Twenty dollars! going! Twenty, only. Who's the fortunate buyer?"

"Sellum, John Sellum," said our friend.

"John Sellum, twenty dollars," says the auctioneer; "you've got a horse as is a horse, Mr. Sellum."

And the fortunate John bore his magnificent charger away in triumph. A few days subsequently, an old acquaintance met John in the cars, and inquired about his purchase.

"Got that horse yet, John?"

"No, I sold him."

"So soon—what for?"

"Wal, nothin' in particular; but I didn't fancy the critter, all things considered."

"He was sound; wasn't he?"

"Wall, I reckon he wasn't; that is to say, I calk'late he wasn't. Show'd very good pluck, till I

got him down into Washington Street, after I left the baz-a-r, but just opposite the Old South, he fell slap down on the pavement."

"Pshaw! you don't say so!"

"Yaas. Blindstaggers—wust kind. But I didn't mind that, so I took him home, and nussed him up a little. Put him in the gig next day; wouldn't start a peg! Coax'd him, draw'd him, run a hot wire in his ear, wollup'd him, and so forth; and finally, I built a fire under him. All no use; cunning cuss, sot rite down on the pile o' lighted shavins, and put it out."

Here his friend smiled.

"That wasn't nothin' tho'. Went to git inter the wag'n, and he started 'fore I gath'red up the ribbins. Went 'bout three rods for'ard, and stopped agin quicker'n lightnin'. Brought him back, put him in the stall—low stable—got out of his reach, and then begun to whale him. Then he kicked up agin; knocked the floorin' all through over head, stove his shoes off, broke his halter, and then run back inter the stable-floor. Trap-door happened to be open, and down went his hind legs, clear to the hips. There I had him foul."

"Yes, you did," replied his friend.

"I got a piece o' plank, an' I lam'd 'im for 'bout ten minutes, w'en, I be hanged, if he didn't *git mad!* and kick hisself out o' the hole. Next mornin' found him swelled up big as four hogsheads. Rub'd sperrets o' turpentine all over 'im, an the ungrateful rascal kep tryin' to kick me for't. Give him nothin to eat for eight days, and the swellin' went down. Took him out o' the stable, and found him lame *behind*."

"Very likely."

"But on a closer examination, see he was full as lame for'ard; one balanced t'other, so's he couldn't limp. One eye had been knocked out in the fight, but the head-stall kivered that misfort'n. Brushed 'im up kerefully, and put on the shiny harness. Led him down the street, an' met an old gent in search of a 'spirited' beast. Asked me if I wanted to sell?

"'No, Sir,' sez I.

"'Wot'll you take for'm?' sez he.

"'He's high strung,' sez I.

"'He is,' sez he; 'wot's he wuth?'

"'I never warrants hosses,' sez I. 'If you want'm jest as he is. You're a good judge o' hosses, no doubt?' sez I.

"'Wal, I am,' sez he.

"'Very well, then; you may have'm for two hundred dollars.'

"The old gent pecked in his mouth, stroked his neck, looked very knowin', and replied:

"'I'll give you a hundred and fifty.'

"'Split the difference,' sez I.

"'Done!' sez he.

"'The hoss is yourn,' sez I.

"He give me the money, took the animal, an' that's the last I've heene o' him or that hoss."

"Possible!" exclaimed his friend.

"Yaas, under all the circumstances, I thort it wan't best to keep the beast, you see, so I let him go."

"Where are you going now?" asked his friend.

"To York."

"When do you return?"

"*Not at present,*" said Mr. Sellum, slyly; and I reckon he didn't.

XV.

METAPHYSICS.*

Most people are of opinion that whatever is, is right; but, strange to say, an acquaintance with pen and ink and that sort of thing is very apt to reverse this opinion. No sooner do we begin to study metaphysics, than we find how egregiously we have been mistaken, in supposing that "Master Parson is really Master Parson."

I, for my part, have a high opinion of metaphysical studies, and think the science a very useful one, because it teaches people what sheer nobodies they are. The only objection is, they are

* Anonymous.

not disposed to lay this truth sufficiently to heart, but continue to give themselves airs, just as if some folks were really some folks.

Old Doctor Sobersides, the minister of Pumpkinville, where I lived in my youth, was one of the metaphysical divines of the old school, and could cavil upon the ninth part of a hair about entities and quiddities, nominalism and realism, free will and necessity, with which sort of learning he used to stuff his sermons and astound his learned hearers, the bumpkins. I never doubted that it was all true, but were apt to say with the old woman in Molière:

"Il parle si bien que je n'entend goutte."

I remember a conversation that happened at my grandfather's, in which the Doctor had some difficulty in making his metaphysics all "as clear as preaching." There was my grandfather; Uncle Tim, who was the greatest hand at raising onions in our part of the country, but "not knowing metaphysics, had no notion of the true reason of his not being sad;" my Aunt Judy Keturah Titterwell, who could knit stockings like all possest, but could not syllogize; Malachi Muggs, our hired

man, that drove the oxen, and Isaac Thrasher, the district schoolmaster, who had dropped in to warm his fingers and get a drink of cider. Something was under discussion, and my grandfather could make nothing of it; but the Doctor said it was "metaphysically true."

"Pray, Doctor," said Uncle Tim, "tell me something about metaphysics; I have often heard of that science, but never for my life could find out what it was."

"Metaphysics," said the Doctor, "is the science of abstractions."

"I'm no wiser for that explanation," said Uncle Tim.

"It treats," said the Doctor, "of matters most profound and sublime, a little difficult perhaps for a common intellect or an unschooled capacity to fathom, but not the less important, on that account, to all living beings."

"What does it teach?" asked the schoolmaster.

"It is not applied so much to the operation of teaching," answered the Doctor, "as to that of inquiring; and the chief inquiry is, whether things are, or whether they are not."

"I don't understand the question," said Uncle Tim, taking the pipe out of his mouth.

"For example, whether this earth on which we tread," said the Doctor, giving a heavy stamp on the floor, and setting his foot slap on the cat's tail, "whether this earth does really exist, or whether it does not exist."

"That is a point of considerable consequence to settle," said my grandfather.

"Especially," added the schoolmaster, "to the holders of real estate."

"Now the earth," continued the Doctor, "may exist—"

"Who the dogs ever doubted that?" asked Uncle Tim.

"A great many men," said the Doctor, "and some very learned ones."

Uncle Tim stared a moment, and then began to fill up his pipe, whistling the tune of High Betty Martin, while the Doctor went on:

"The earth, I say, may exist, although Bishop Berkeley has proved beyond all possible gainsaying or denial, that it does not exist. The case is clear; the only difficulty is, to know whether we shall believe it or not."

"And how," asked Uncle Tim, "is all this to be found out?"

"By digging down to the first principles," answered the Doctor.

"Ay," interrupted Malachi, "there is nothing equal to the spade and pickaxe."

"That is true," said my grandfather, going on in Malachi's way, "'tis by digging for the foundation that we shall find out whether the world exists or not; for, if we dig to the bottom of the earth and find a foundation—why then we are sure of it. But if we find no foundation, it is clear that the world stands upon nothing, or, in other words, that it does not stand at all; therefore, it stands to reason—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the Doctor, "but you totally mistake me; I use the word *digging* metaphorically, meaning the profoundest cogitation and research into the nature of things. That is the way in which we may ascertain whether things are or whether they are not."

"But if a man can't believe his eyes," said Uncle Tim, "what signifies talking about it?"

"Our eyes," said the Doctor, "are nothing at all but the inlets of sensation, and when we see

a thing, all we are aware of is, that we have a sensation of it; we are not sure that the thing exists. We are sure of nothing that we see with our eyes."

"Not without spectacles," said Aunt Judy.

"Plato, for instance, maintains that the sensation of any object is produced by a perpetual succession of copies, images, or counterfeits streaming off from the object to the organs of sensation. Descartes, too, has explained the matter upon the principle of whirligigs."

"But does the world exist?" asked the schoolmaster.

"A good deal may be said on both sides," replied the Doctor, "though the ablest heads are for non-existence."

"In common cases," said Uncle Tim, "those who utter nonsense are considered blockheads."

"But in metaphysics," said the Doctor, "the case is different."

"Now all this is hocus pocus to me," said Aunt Judy, suspending her knitting work, and scratching her forehead with one of the needles. "I don't understand a bit more of the business than I did at first."

"I'll be bound there is many a learned professor," said Uncle Tim, "could say the same after spinning a long yarn of metaphysics."

The Doctor did not admire this gibe at his favourite science.

"That is as the case may be," said he; "this thing or that thing may be dubious, but what then? Doubt is the beginning of wisdom."

"No doubt of that," said my grandfather, beginning to poke the fire, "but when a man has got through his doubting, what does he begin to build upon in the metaphysical way?"

"Why, he begins by taking something for granted," said the Doctor.

"But is that a sure way of going to work?"

"'Tis the only thing he can do," replied the Doctor, after a pause, and rubbing his forehead as if he was not altogether satisfied that his foundation was a solid one. My grandfather might have posed him with another question, but he poked the fire and let him go on.

"Metaphysics, to speak exactly—"

"Ah," interrupted the schoolmaster, "bring it down to vulgar fractions, and then we shall understand it."

"'Tis the consideration of immateriality, or the mere spirit and essence of things."

"Come, come," said Aunt Judy, taking a pinch of snuff, "now I see into it."

"Thus, man is considered, not in his corporeality, but in his essence or capability of being; for a man metaphysically, or to metaphysical purposes, hath two natures, that of spirituality and that of corporeity, which may be considered separate."

"What man?" asked Uncle Tim.

"Why any man; Malachi there, for example, I may consider him as Malachi spiritual or Malachi corporal."

"That is true," said Malachi, "for when I was in the militia, they made me a sixteenth corporal, and I carried grog to the drummer."

"That is another affair," said the Dòctor, in continuation, "we speak of man in his essence; we speak also of the essence of locality, the essence of duration—"

"And essence of peppermint," said Aunt Judy.

"Pooh!" said the Doctor, "the essence I mean is quite a different concern."

"Something too fine to be dribbled through the worm of a still," said my grandfather.

"Then I am all in the dark again," rejoined Aunt Judy.

"By the spirit and essence of things I mean things in the abstract."

"And what becomes of a thing when it gets into the abstract?" asked Uncle Tim.

"Why, it becomes an abstraction."

"There we are again," said Uncle Tim; "but what the deuce is an abstraction?"

"It's a thing that has no matter; that is, it cannot be felt, seen, heard, smelt or tasted; it has no substance or solidity; it is neither large nor small, hot nor cold, long nor short."

"Then what is the long and short of it?" asked the schoolmaster.

"Abstraction," replied the Doctor.

"Suppose, for instance," said Malachi, "that I had a pitchfork—"

"Ay," said the Doctor, "consider a pitchfork in general; that is, neither this one nor that one, nor any particular one, but a pitchfork or pitchforks divested of their materiality—these are things in the abstract."

"They are things in the hay-mow," said Malachi.

"Pray," said Uncle Tim, "have there been many such things discovered?"

"Discovered!" returned the Doctor, "why all things, whether in heaven or upon the earth, or in the waters under the earth, whether small or great, visible or invisible, animate or inanimate; whatever the eye can see, or the ear can hear, or the nose can smell, or the fingers touch; finally, whatever exists or is imaginable in *rerum natura*, past, present or to come, all may be abstractions."

"Indeed!" said Uncle Tim, "pray what do you make of the abstraction of a red cow?"

"A red cow," said the Doctor, "considered metaphysically, or as an abstraction, is an animal possessing neither hide nor horns, bones nor flesh, but is the mere type, eidolon, and fantastical semblance of these parts of a quadruped. It has a shape without any substance, and no colour at all, for its redness is the mere counterfeit or imagination of such. As it lacks the positive, so is it also deficient in the accidental properties of all the animals of its tribe, for it has no locomotion, stability, or endurance, neither goes to pasture, gives milk, chews the cud, nor performs any other function of a horned beast, but is a mere creature of the brain, begotten

by a freak of the fancy, and nourished by a conceit of the imagination."

"A dog's foot!" exclaimed Aunt Judy. "All the metaphysics under the sun wouldn't make a pound of butter."

"That's a fact!" said Uncle Tim.

XVI.

A TIGHT RACE CONSIDERIN'.

During my medical studies, passed in a small village in Mississippi, I became acquainted with a family named Hibbs, residing a few miles in the country. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Hibbs and son. They were plain, unlettered people, honest in intent and deed, but overflowing with that which amply made up for all their deficiences of education, namely, warm-hearted hospitality, the distinguishing trait of southern character. They were originally from Virginia, from whence they had emigrated in quest of a clime more genial, and a soil more productive than that in which their fathers toiled.

Their search had been rewarded, their expectations realized, and now, in their old age, though not wealthy in the "Astorian" sense, still they had sufficient to keep the "wolf from the door," and drop something more substantial than condolence and tears, in the hat that poverty hands round for the kind offerings of humanity.

The old man was like the generality of old planters, men whose ambition is embraced by the family or social circle, and whose thoughts turn more on the relative value of "Sea Island" and "Mastodon," and the improvement of their plantations, than the "glorious victories of Whiggery in Kentucky," or the "triumphs of democracy in Arkansas."

The old lady was a shrewd, active dame, kind-hearted and long-tongued, benevolent and impartial, making her coffee as strong for the poor pedestrian, with his all upon his back, as the broadcloth sojourner, with his "up-country pacer."

She was a member of the church, as well as the daughter of a man who had once owned a race-horse: and these circumstances gave her an indisputable right, she thought, to "let on all she knew," when religion or horse-flesh was the theme.

At one moment, she would be heard discussing whether the new "circus rider," (as she always called the preacher,) was as affecting in Timothy as the old one was pathetic in Paul, and anon, protecting dad's horse from the invidious comparisons of some visitor, who, having heard, perhaps, that such horses as Fashion and Boston existed, thought himself qualified to doubt the old lady's assertion that her father's horse "Shumach" had run a mile on one particular occasion.

"Don't tell *me*," was her never-failing reply to their doubts, "don't tell *me* 'bout Fashun or Bosting, or any other beating 'Shumach a fair race, for the thing was unfesible: didn't he run a mile a minute by Squire Dim's watch, which always stopt 'zactly at twelve, and didn't he start a minute afore, and git out, jes as the long hand war givin' its last quiver on ketchin' the short leg of the watch? And didn't he beat everything in Virginny 'cept once? Dad and the folks said he'd beat then, if young Mr. Spotswood hadn't give 'old Swaga,' Shumach's rider, some of that 'Croton water,' and jis 'fore the race Swage or Shumach, I don't 'stinctly 'member which, but one of them had to '*let down*,' and so dad's hoss got beat."

The son I will describe in a few words. Imbibing his parents' contempt for letters, he was very illiterate, and as he had not enjoyed the equivalent of travel, was extremely ignorant on all matters not relating to hunting or plantation duties. He was a stout, active fellow, with a merry twinkling of the eye, indicative of humour, and partiality for practical joking. We had become very intimate, he instructing me in "forest lore," and I, in return, giving amusing stories, or, what was as much to his liking, occasional introductions to my hunting-flask.

Now that I have introduced the "Dramatis Personæ," I will proceed with my story. By way of relaxation, and to relieve the tedium incident more or less to a student's life, I would take my gun, walk out to old Hibbs's, spend a day or two, and return refreshed to my books.

One fine afternoon I started upon such an excursion, and as I had, upon a previous occasion missed killing a fine buck, owing to my having nothing but squirrel shot, I determined to go this time for the "antlered monarch," by loading one barrel with fifteen "blue whistlers," reserving the other for small game.

At the near end of the plantation was a fine

spring, and adjacent, a small cave, the entrance artfully or naturally concealed, save to one acquainted with its locality. The cave was nothing but one of those subterranean washes so common in the west and south, and called "sink-holes."

It was known only to young H. and myself, and we, for peculiar reasons, kept secret, having put it in requisition as the depository of a jug of "old Bourbon," which we favoured, and as the old folks abominated drinking, we had found convenient to keep there, whither we would repair to get our drinks, and return to the house to hear them descant on the evils of drinking, and "vow no 'drap,' 'cept in doctor's truck, should ever come on their plantation."

Feeling very thirsty, I took my way by the spring that evening. As I descended the hill o'ertopping it, I beheld the hind parts of a bear slowly being drawn into the cave.

My heart bounded at the idea of killing a bear, and my plans were formed in a second. I had no dogs—the house was distant—and the bear becoming "small by degrees, and beautifully less." Every hunter knows, if you shoot a squirrel in the head when it's sticking out of a hole, ten to one he'll jump out; and I reasoned that if this were

true regarding squirrels, might not the operation of the same principle extract a bear, applying it low down in the back.

Quick as thought I levelled my gun and fired, intending to give him the buckshot when his body appeared; but what was my surprise and horror, when, instead of a bear rolling out, the parts were jerked nervously in, and the well-known voice of young H. reached my ears.

"Murder! Ingins! snakes and kuckle-burs! Oh! Lordy! 'nuff!—'nuff!—take him off! Jis let me off this wunst, dad, and I'll never run mam's colt again! Oh, Lordy! Lordy! *all my brains blowed clean out!* Snakes! snakes!" yelled he, in a shriller tone, if possible, "Old Scratch on the outside and snakes in the sink-hole! I'll die a Christian, anyhow, and if I die before I wake," and out scrambled poor H., pursued by a large black-snake.

If my life had depended on it, I could not have restrained my laughter. Down fell the gun, and down dropped I shrieking convulsively. The hill was steep, and over and over I went, until my head striking against a stump at the bottom, stopped me, half senseless. On recovering somewhat from the stunning blow, I found Hibbs upon me, taking

satisfaction from me for having blowed out his brains. A contest ensued, and H. finally relinquished his hold, but I saw from the knitting of his brows, that the bear-storm, instead of being over, was just brewing.

"Mr. Tensas," he said with awful dignity, "I'm sorry I put into you 'fore you cum to, but you're at yourself now, and as you've tuck a shot at me, it's no more than far I should have a chance 'fore the hunt's up."

It was with the greatest difficulty I could get H. to bear with me until I explained the mistake; but as soon as he learned it, he broke out in a huge laugh:

"Oh, Dod busted! that's 'nuff; you has my pardon. I ought to know'd you didn't 'tend it; 'sides, you jis scraped the skin. I war wus skeered than hurt, and if you'll go to the house and beg me off from the old folks, I'll never let on you cuddent tell copperas breeches from bar-skin."

Promising that I would use my influence, I proposed taking a drink, and that he should tell me how he had incurred his parent's anger. He assented, and after we had inspected the cave, and seen that it held no other serpent than the

one we craved, we entered its cool recess, and H. commenced:

"You see, Doc, I'd heered so much from mam 'bout her dad's Shumach and his nigger Swage, and the mile a minute, and the Croton water what was gin him, and how she bleved that if it warn't for bettin', and the cussin' and fightin', runnin' race-hosses warn't the sin folks said it war; and if they war anything to make her 'gret gettin' religion and jinin' the church, it war cos she couldn't 'tend races, and have a race-colt of her own to comfort her 'clinin' years, sich as her daddy had afore her; so I couldn't rest for wantin' to see a hoss-race, and go shares, p'raps, in the colt she war wishin' for.

"And then I'd think what sort of a hoss I'd want him to be—a quarter nag, a mile critter, or a hoss what could run (fur all mam says it can't be did) a whole four mile at a stretch. Sometimes I think I'd rather own a quarter nag, for the suspense wouldn't long be hung, and then we could run up the road to old Nick Bamer's cow-pen, and Sally is almost allers out thar in the cool of the evenin'; and in course we wouldn't be so cruel as to run the poor critter in the heat of the day. But then agin, I'd think I'd rather have a miler; for the 'citement

would be greater, and we could run down the road to old Wither's orchard, an his gal Miry is frightfully fond of sunnin' herself thar, when she 'spects me 'long, and she'd hear of the race, certain; but then thar war the four miler for my thinkin', and I'd knew'd in such case the 'citement would be greatest of all, and you know, too, from dad's stable to the grocery is jist four miles, an' in case of any 'spute, all hands would be willin' to run over, even if it had to be tried a dozen times.

"So I never could 'cide on which sort of a colt to wish for. It was fust one, then t'others, till I was nearly 'stracted. So I found the best way was to get the hoss fust, and then 'termine whether it should be Sally Bamers, and the cow-pen; Miry Withers, and the peach orchard; or Spillman's grocery, with the bald face.

"You've seed my black colt, that one that dad's father gin me in his will when he died, and I 'spect the reason he wrote that will war, that he might have wun then, for it's more then he had when he was alive, for granma war a monstrus overbearin' woman. The colt would cum up in my mind, every time I'd think whar I was to git a hoss. 'Git out!' said I at fust—*he* never could run, and 'sides if he could, mam rides him now, an he's too

old for anything, 'cept totin her and bein' called mine; for you see, though he war named Colt, yet for the old lady to call him old, would bin like the bar 'fecting contempt for the rabbit, on account of the shortness of his tail.

"Well, thought I, it does look sorter unpromisin', but it's colt or none; so I 'termined to put him in trainin' the fust chance. Last Saturday, who should cum ridin' up but the new circut preacher, a long-legged, weakly, sickly, never-contented-on-less-the-best-on-the-plantation-war-cooked-fur-him sort of a man; but I didn't look at him twice, his hoss was the critter that took my eye; for the minute I looked at him, I knew him to be the same hoss as Sam Spooner used to win all his splurgin' dimes with, the folks said, and wot he used to ride past our house so fine on. The hoss war a heap the wuss for age and change of masters; for preachers, though they're mity 'ticular 'bout thar own comfort, seldom tends to thar hosses; for one is privit property and 'tother generally borried.

"I seed from the way the preacher rid, that he didn't know the animal he war straddlin'; but I did, and I 'termined I wouldn't lose sich a chance of trainin' Colt by the side of a hoss wot had run

real races. So that night, arter prayers and the folks was abed, I and Nigger Bill tuck the hosses and carried them down to the pastur'. It war a forty-aker lot, and consequently jist a quarter across —for I thought it best to promote Colt, by degrees, to a four-miler. When we got thar, the preacher's hoss showed he war willin'; but Colt, dang him! commenced nibblin' a fodder-stack over the fence. I nearly cried for vexment, but an idea struck me; I hitched the critter, and told Bill to get on Colt and stick tight wen I giv' the word. Bill got reddy, and unbeknownst to him I pulled up a bunch of nettles, and, as I clapped them under Colt's tail, yelled, 'Go!' Down shut his graceful like a steel-trap, and away he shot so quick an' fast that he jumpt clean out from under Bill, and got nearly to the end of the quarter 'fore the nigger toch the ground: he lit on his head, and in course warn't hurt—so we cotched Colt, an' I mounted him.

"The next time I said 'go' he showed that age hadn't spiled his legs or memory. Bill 'an me 'greed we could run him now, so Bill mounted Preacher and we got ready. Thar war a narrer part of the track 'tween two oaks, but as it war near the end of the quarter, I 'spected to pass Preacher 'fore we got thar, so I warn't afraid of barkin' my shins.

"We tuck a fair start, and off we went like a peeled ingun, an' I soon 'scovered that it warn't such an easy matter to pass Preacher, though Colt dun delightful; we got nigh the trees, and Preacher warn't past yet, an' I 'gan to get skeered, for it warn't more than wide enuf for a horse and a half; so I hollered to Bill to hold up, but the imperdent nigger turned his ugly pictur, and said, 'he'd be cussed if he warn't goin' to play his han' out.' I gin him to understand he'd better fix for a foot-race when we stopt, and tried to hold up Colt, but he wouldn't stop. We reached the oaks, Colt tried to pass Preacher, Preacher tried to pass Colt, and cowollop, crosh, cochunk! we all cum down like 'simmons arter frost. Colt got up and won the race; Preacher tried hard to rise, but one hind leg had got threw the stirrup, an' tother in the head stall, an' he had to lay still, doubled up like a long nigger in a short bed. I lit on my feet, but Nigger Bill war gone entire. I looked up in the fork of one of the oaks, and thar he war sittin', lookin' very composed on surroundin' nature. I couldn't git him down till I promised not to hurt him for disobeyin' orders, when he slid down. We'd 'nuff racin' for that night, so we put up the hosses and went to bed.

"Next morning the folks got ready for church, when it was diskivered that the hosses had got out. I an' Bill started off to look for them; we found them cleer off in the field, tryin' to git in the pastur' to run the last night's race over, old Blaze, the reverlushunary mule, bein' along to act as judge.

"By the time we got to the house it war nigh on to meetin' hour; and dad had started to the preachin', to tell the folks to sing on, as preacher and mam would be 'long bimeby. As the passun war in a hurry, and had been complainin' that his creetur war dull, I 'suaded him to put on uncle Jim's spurs what he fotch from Mexico. I saddled the passun's hoss, takin' 'ticular pains to let the saddle-blanket come down low in the flank. By the time these fixins war threw, mam war 'head nigh on to a quarter. 'We must ride on, passun,' I said, 'or the folks'll think we is lost.' So I whipt up the mule I rid, the passun chirrupt and chuct to make his crittur gallop, but the animal didn't mind him a pic. I 'gan to snicker, an' the passun 'gan to git vext; sudden he thought of his spurs, so he ris up, an' drove them *vim* in his hoss's flanx, till they went through his saddle-blanket, and like to bored his nag to the holler. By gosh! but war a quickener

—the hoss kickt till the passun had to hug him round the neck to keep from pitchin' him over his head. He next jumpt up 'bout as high as a rail fence, passun holdin' on and tryin' to git his spurs —but they war lockt—his breeches split plum across with the strain, and the piece of wearin' truck wot's next the skin made a monstrous putty flag as the old hoss, like drunkards to a barbacue, streakt it up the road.

"Mam war ridin' slowly along, thinkin' how sorry she was, cos Chary Dolin, who always led her off, had sich a bad cold, an' wouldn't be able to 'sist her singin' to-day. She war practisin' the hymns, and had got as far whar it says, 'I have a race to run,' when the passun huv in sight, an' in 'bout the dodgin' of a diedapper, she found thar war truth in the words, for the colt, hearin' the hoss cumin' up behind, began to show symptoms of runnin'; but when he heard the passun holler, 'wo wo!' to his horse, he thought it war me shoutin' 'go!' and sure 'nuff off they started jis as the passun got up even; so it war a fair race. Whoop! git out, but it war egsitin'—the dust flew, and the rail-fence appeered strate as a rifle. Thar war the passun, his legs fast to the critter's flanx, arms lockt round his neck, face as pale as a rabbit's belly, and

the white flag streemin' far behind—and thar war Mam, fust on one side, then on t'other, her new caliker swelled up round her like a bear with the dropsy, the old lady so much surprized she cuddent ride steddy, an' tryin' to stop her colt, but he war too well trained to stop while he heard 'go !'

"Mam got 'sited at last, and her eyes 'gan to glimmer like she seen her daddy's ghost axin' 'if he ever trained up a child or a race-hoss to be 'fraid of a small brush on a Sunday,' she commenced ridin' beautiful; she braced herself up in the saddle, and began to make calkerlations how she war to win the race, for it war nose and nose, and she saw the passun spurrin' his critter every jump. She tuk off her shoe, and the way a number ten go-to-meetin' brogan commenced givin' a hoss particular Moses, were a caution to hoss-flesh—but still it kept nose and nose. She found she war carryin' too much weight for Colt, so she 'gan to throw off plunder, till nuthin' was left but her saddle and close, and the spurs kept tellin' still. The old woman commenced strippin' to lighten till it wouldn't bin the clean thing for her to have taken off one dud more; an' then when she found it war no use while the spurs lasted, she got cantankerous.

"'Passun,' said she, 'I'll be cust if it's fair or

gentlemanly for you, a preacher of the gospel, to take advantage of an old woman this way, usin' spurs when you know *she* can't wear 'em—'taint Christian-like nuther,' and she bust into cryin'.

"'Wo! Miss Hibbs! Wo! Stop! Madam! Wo! Your son!' he attempted to say, when the old woman tuck him on the back of the head, and fillin' his mouth with right smart of a saddle-horn, and stoppin' the talk, as far as his share went for the present.

"By this time they'd got nigh on to the meetin'-house, and the folks were harkin' away on 'Old Hundred,' and wonderin' what could have become of the passun and Mam Hibbs. One sister in a long beard axt another brethren in church, if she'd heerd anything 'bout that New York preecher runnin' way with a woman old enough to be his muther. The brethrens gin a long sigh an' groaned:

"'It ain't possible! marciful heavens! you don't 'spicion?' wen the sound of the hosses comin', roused them up like a touch of the agur, an' broke off their sarpent-talk.

"Dad run out to see what was to pay, but when he seed the hosses so close together, the passun spurrin', and mam ridin' close war skase whar she

cum, he knew her fix in a second, and 'tarmined to help her; so clinchin' a saplin', he hid 'hind a stump 'bout ten steps off, and held on for the hosses. On they went in beautiful style, the passun's spurs tellin' terrible, and mam's shoe operatin' 'no small pile of punkins,'—passun stretched out the length of two hosses, while mam sot as stiff and strate as a bull yearling in his fust fight, hittin' her nag fust on one side, next on t'other, and the third for the passun, who had chawed the horn till little of the saddle, and less of his teeth war left, and his voice sounded as holler as a jackass-nicker in an old saw-mill.

"The hosses war nose and nose, jam up together so close that mam's last kiverin' and passun's flag had got lockt, an' 'tween bleached domestic and striped lindsey made a beautiful banner for the pious racers.

"On they went like a small arthquake, an' it seemed like it war goin' to be a draun race; but dad, when they got to him, let down with all his might on Colt, scarin' him so bad that he jumpt clean ahead of passun, beatin' him by a neck, buttin' his own head agin the meetin'-house, an' pitchin' mam, like a lam for the sacryfise, plum through the winder 'mongst the mourners, leavin'

her only garment flutterin' on a nail in the sash. The men shot their eyes and scrambled outen the house, an' the woman gin mam so much of their close that they like to put themselves in the same fix.

"The passun quit the circut, and I haven't been home yet."

XVII.

A SHARK STORY.

"WELL, gentlemen, I'll go ahead, if you say so. Here's the story. It is true, upon my honour, from beginning to end—every word of it. I once crossed over to Faulkner's island to fish for *tautaugs*, as the north-side people call black fish, on the reefs hard by, in the Long Island Sound. Tim Titus (who died of the dropsy down at Shinnecock point, last spring) lived there then. Tim was a right good fellow, only he drank rather too much.

"It was during the latter part of July; the sharks and the dog-fish had just began to spoil sport. When Tim told me about the sharks, I resolved to go prepared to entertain these aquatic savages with all becoming attention and regard, if

there should chance to be any interloping about our fishing ground. So, we rigged out a set of extra large hooks, and shipped some rope-yarn and steel chain, an axe, a couple of clubs, and an old harpoon, in addition to our ordinary equipments, and off we started. We threw out our anchor at half ebb-tide, and took some thumping large fish; two of them weighed thirteen pounds—so you may judge. The reef where we lay was about half a mile from the island, and, perhaps, a mile from the Connecticut shore. We floated there, very quietly, throwing out and hauling in, until the breaking of my line, with a sudden and severe jerk, informed me that the sea attorneys were in waiting, down stairs; and we accordingly prepared to give them a retainer. A salt pork cloak upon one of our magnum hooks forthwith engaged one of the gentlemen in our service. We got him alongside, and by dint of piercing, and thrusting, and banging, we accomplished a most exciting and merry murder. We had business enough of the kind to keep us employed until near low water. By this time, the sharks had all cleared out, and the black fish were biting again; the rock began to make its appearance above the water, and in a little while its hard bald head was entirely dry. Tim now proposed to

set me out upon the rock, while he rowed ashore to get the jug, which, strange to say, we had left at the house. I assented to this proposition; first, because I began to feel the effects of the sun upon my tongue, and needed something to take, by the way of medicine; and secondly because the rock was a favourite spot for rod and reel, and famous for luck: so I took my *traps*, and a box of bait, and jumped upon my new station. Tim made for the island.

"Not many men would willingly have been left upon a little barren reef that was covered by every flow of the tide, in the midst of a waste of waters, at such a distance from the shore, even with an assurance from a companion more to be depended upon than mine, that he would return immediately and take him off. But some how or other, the excitement of the sport was so high, and the romance of the situation was so delightful, that I thought of nothing else but the prospect of my fun, and the contemplation of the novelty and beauty of the scene. It was a mild, pleasant afternoon, in harvest time. The sky was clear and pure. The deep blue sound, heaving all around me, was studded with craft of all descriptions and dimensions, from the dipping sail-boat to the rolling merchantman, sinking and rising like sea-birds sporting with their

white wings in the surge. The grain and grass on the neighbouring farms were gold and green, and gracefully they bent obeisance to a gently breathing south-wester. Farther off, the high upland, and the distant coast, gave a dim relief to the prominent features of the landscape, and seemed the rich but dusky frame of a brilliant fairy picture. Then, how still it was! not a sound could be heard, except the occasional rustling of my own motion, and the water beating against the sides, or gurgling in the fissures of the rock, or except now and then the cry of a solitary saucy gull, who would come out of his way in the firmament, to see what I was doing without a boat, all alone, in the middle of the sound; and who would hover, and cry, and chatter, and make two or three circling swoops and dashes at me, and then, after having satisfied his curiosity, glide away in search of some other food to scream at.

"I soon became half indolent, and quite indifferent about fishing; so I stretched myself out at full length upon the rock and gave myself up to the luxury of looking and thinking. The divine exercise soon put me fast asleep. I dreamed away a couple of hours, and longer might have dreamed, but for a tired fish-hawk who chose to make my

head his resting place, and who waked and started me to my feet.

"'Where is Tim Titus?' I muttered to myself, as I strained my eyes over the now darkened water. But none was near me to answer that interesting question, and nothing was to be seen of either Tim or his boat. 'He should have been here long ere this,' thought I, 'and he promised faithfully not to stay long—could he have forgotten? or has he paid too much devotion to the jug?'

"I began to feel uneasy, for the tide was rising fast, and soon would cover the top of the rock, and high water-mark was at least a foot above my head. I buttoned up my coat, for either the coming coolness of the evening, or else my growing apprehensions, had set me trembling and chattering most painfully. I braced my nerves, and set my teeth, and tried to hum 'Begone, dull care,' keeping time with my fists upon my thighs. But what music! what melancholy merriment! I started and shuddered at the doleful sound of my own voice. I am not naturally a coward; but I should like to know the man who would not, in such a situation, be alarmed. It is a cruel death to die to be merely drowned, and to go through

the ordinary common-places of suffocation; but to see your death gradually rising to your eyes, to feel the water rising, inch by inch, upon your shivering sides, and to anticipate the certainly coming, choking struggle for your last breath, when, with the gurgling sound of an overflowing brook taking a new direction, the cold brine pours into mouth, ears, and nostrils, usurping the seat and avenues of health and life, and, with gradual flow, stifling—smothering—suffocating! It were better to die a thousand common deaths.

"This is one of the instances in which, it must be admitted, salt water is not a pleasant subject of contemplation. However, the rock was not yet covered, and hope, blessed hope, stuck faithfully by me. To beguile, if possible, the weary time, I put on a bait, and threw out for fish. I was sooner successful than I could have wished to be, for hardly had my line struck the water, before the hook was swallowed, and my rod was bent with the dead hard pull of a twelve foot shark. I let him run about fifty yards, and then reeled up. He appeared not at all alarmed, and I could scarcely feel him bear upon my fine hair line. He followed the pull gently and unresisting, came up to the rock, laid his nose upon its side, and looked up

into my face, not as if utterly unconcerned, but with a sort of quizzical impudence, as though he perfectly understood the precarious nature of my situation. The conduct of my captive renewed and increased my alarm. And well it might; for the tide was now running over a corner of the rock behind me, and a small stream rushed through a cleft, or fissure, by my side, and formed a puddle at my very feet. I broke my hook out of the monster's mouth, and leaned upon my rod for support.

"'Where is Tim Titus?' I cried aloud. 'Curse on the drunken vagabond! Will he never come?'

"My ejaculations did no good. No Timothy appeared. It became evident that I must prepare for drowning, or for action. The reef was completely covered, and the water was above the soles of my feet. I was not much of a swimmer, and as to ever reaching the island, I could not even hope for that. However, there was no alternative, and I tried to encourage myself, by reflecting that necessity was the mother of invention, and that desperation will sometimes insure success. Besides, too, I considered and took comfort from the thought that I could wait for Tim, so long as

I had a foothold, and then commit myself to the uncertain strength of my arms and legs for salvation. So I turned my bait-box upside down, and mounting upon that, endeavoured to comfort my spirits, and to be courageous, but submissive to my fate. I thought of death, and what it might bring with it, and I tried to repent of the multiplied iniquities of my almost wasted life; but I found that that was no place for a sinner to settle his accounts. Wretched soul, pray I could not.

"The water had not got above my ankles, when, to my inexpressible joy, I saw a sloop bending down towards me, with the evident intention of picking me up. No man can imagine what were the sensations of gratitude which filled my bosom at that moment.

"When she got within a hundred yards of the reef, I sung out to the man at the helm to luff up, and lie by, and lower the boat; but to my amazement, I could get no reply, nor notice of my request. I entreated them, for the love of heaven, to take me off; and I promised, I know not what rewards, that were entirely beyond my power of bestowal. But the brutal wretch of a captain, muttering something to the effect of 'that he hadn't time to stop,' and giving me the kind and sensible

advice to pull off my coat and swim ashore, put the helm hard down, and away bore the sloop on the other tack.

"'Heartless villain!' I shrieked out, in the torture of my disappointment; 'may God reward your inhumanity.'

"The crew answered my prayer with a coarse, loud laugh; and the cook asked me through a speaking trumpet, 'If I was not afraid of catching cold.'—The black rascal!

"It now was time to strip; for my knees felt the cool tide, and the wind dying away, left a heavy swell, that swayed and shook the box upon which I was mounted, so that I had occasionally to stoop, and paddle with my hands against the water in order to preserve my perpendicular. The setting sun sent his almost horizontal streams of fire across the dark waters, making them gloomy and terrific, by the contrast of his amber and purple glories.

"Something glided by me in the water, and then made a sudden halt. I looked upon the black mass, and, as my eye ran along its dark outline, I saw, with horror, that it was a shark; the identical monster out of whose mouth I had just broken my hook. He was fishing now for me, and was evidently only waiting for the tide to rise high enough above

the rock, to glut at once his hunger and revenge. As the water continued to mount above my knees, he seemed to grow more hungry and familiar. At last, he made a desperate dash, and approaching within an inch of my legs, turned upon his back, and opened his huge jaws for an attack. With desperate strength, I thrust the end of my rod violently at his mouth; and the brass head, ringing against his teeth, threw him back into the deep current, and I lost sight of him entirely. This, however, was but a momentary repulse; for in the next minute he was close behind my back, and pulling at the skirts of my fustian coat, which hung dipping into the water. I leaned forward hastily, and endeavoured to extricate myself from the dangerous grasp; but the monster's teeth were too firmly set, and his immense strength nearly drew me over. So, down flew my rod, and off went my jacket, devoted peace-offerings to my voracious visitor.

"In an instant, the waves all round me were lashed into froth and foam. No sooner was my poor old sporting friend drawn under the surface, than it was fought for by at least a dozen enormous combatants! The battle raged upon every side. High black fins rushed now here, now there, and long, strong tails

scattered sleet and froth, and the brine was thrown up in jets, and eddied and curled, and fell, and swelled, like a whirlpool in Hell-gate.

"Of no long duration, however, was this fishy tourney. It seemed soon to be discovered that the prize contended for contained nothing edible but cheese and crackers, and no flesh; and as its mutilated fragments rose to the surface, the waves subsided into their former smooth condition. Not till then did I experience the real terrors of my situation. As I looked around me to see what had become of the robbers, I counted one, two, three, yes, up to twelve, successively, of the largest sharks I ever saw, floating in a circle around me, like divergent rays, all mathematically equidistant from the rock, and from each other; each perfectly motionless, and with his gloating, fiery eye, fixed full and fierce upon me. Basilisks and rattlesnakes! how the fire of their steady eyes entered into my heart! I was the centre of a circle, whose radii were sharks! I was the unsprung, or rather *unchewed* game, at which a pack of hunting sea-dogs were making a dead point!

"There was one old fellow, that kept within the circumference of the circle. He seemed to be a

sort of captain, or leader of the band; or, rather, he acted as the coroner for the other twelve of the inquisition, that were summoned to sit on, and eat up my body. He glided around and about, and every now and then would stop, and touch his nose against some one of his comrades, and seem to consult, or to give instructions as to the time and mode of operation. Occasionally, he would skull himself up towards me, and examine the condition of my flesh, and then again glide back, and rejoin the troupe, and flap his tail, and have another confabulation. The old rascal had, no doubt, been out into the highways and byways, and collected this company of his friends and kin-fish, and invited them to supper.

"I must confess, that horribly as I felt, I could not help but think of a tea-party, of demure old maids, sitting in a solemn circle, with their skinny hands in their laps, licking their expectant lips, while their hostess bustles about in the important functions of her preparations. With what an eye have I seen such appurtenances of humanity survey the location and adjustment of some especial condiment, which is about to be submitted to criticism and consumption.

"My sensations began to be, now, most exquisite indeed; but I will not attempt to describe them. I was neither hot nor cold, frightened nor composed; but I had a combination of all kinds of feelings and emotions. The present, past, future, heaven, earth, my father and mother, a little girl I knew once, and the sharks, were all confusedly mixed up together, and swelled my crazy brain almost to bursting. I cried, and laughed, and spouted, and screamed for Tim Titus.

"In a fit of most wise madness, I opened my broad-bladed fishing-knife, and waved it around my head with an air of defiance. As the tide continued to rise, my extravagance of madness mounted. At one time, I became persuaded that my tide-waiters were reasonable beings, who might be talked into mercy and humanity, if a body could only hit upon the right text. So, I bowed, and gesticulated, and threw out my hands, and talked to them, as friends, and brothers, members of my family, cousins, uncles, aunts, people waiting to have their bills paid; I scolded them as my servants; I abused them as duns; I implored them as jurymen sitting on the question of my life; I cogratulated, and flattered them as my comrades upon some glorious enterprise; I sung and ranted to them, now as an

actor in a play-house, and now as an elder at a camp-meeting; in one moment, roaring,

"'On this cold flinty rock I will lay down my head,'—

and in the next, giving out to my attentive hearers for singing, a hymn of Dr. Watts so admirably appropriate to the occasion:

"'On slippery rocks I see them stand,
While fiery billows roll below.'

"What said I, what did I not say! Prose and poetry, scripture and drama, romance and ratiocination—out it came. '*Quamdiu, Catalina, nostra patientia abutere?*'—I sung out to the old captain, to begin with: 'My brave associates, partners of my toil,'—so ran the strain. 'On which side soever I turn my eyes,'—'Gentlemen of the jury,'—'I come not here to steal away your hearts,'—'You are not wood, you are not stones, but'—'Hah!'—'Begin, ye tormentors, your tortures are vain,'—'Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to any sudden flood,'—'The angry flood that lashed her groaning sides,'—'Ladies and gentlemen,'—'My very noble and approved good masters,'—'Avaunt! and quit my sight; let the earth hide ye,'—'Lie lightly on his head, O earth!'—'O, heaven and

earth, that it should come to this!'—'The torrent roared, and we did buffet it with lusty sinews, stemming it aside and oaring it with hearts of controversy,'—'Give me some drink, Titinius,'—'Drink, boys, drink, and drown dull sorrow,'—'For liquor it doth roll such comfort to the soul,'—'Romans, countrymen and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear,'—'Fellow citizens, assembled as we are upon this interesting occasion, impressed with the truth and beauty,'—'Isle of beauty, fare thee well,'—'The quality of mercy is not strained,'—'Magna veritas et prevalebit,'—'Truth is potent, and'—'Most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors,'—

"'Oh, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity; these are gracious drops.
Kind souls! what! weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded,'—

Ha! ha! ha!—and I broke out in a fit of most horrible laughter, as I thought of the mincemeat particles of my lacerated jacket.

"In the meantime, the water had got well up towards my shoulders, and while I was shaking and vibrating upon my uncertain foot-hold, I felt the cold nose of the captain of the band snubbing

against my side. Desperately, and without a definite object, I struck my knife at one of his eyes, and, by some singular fortune, cut it out clean from the socket. The shark darted back, and halted. In an instant, hope and reason came to my relief; and it occurred to me, that if I could only blind the monster, I might yet escape. Accordingly, I stood ready for the next attack. The loss of an eye did not seem to affect him much, for after shaking his head once or twice, he came up to me again, and when he was about half an inch off, turned upon his back. This was the critical moment. With a most unaccountable presence of mind, I laid hold of his nose with my left hand, and with my right scooped out his remaining organ of vision. He opened his big mouth, and champed his long teeth at me, in despair. But it was all over with him. I raised my right foot and gave him a hard shove, and he glided off into deep water, and went to the bottom.

"Well, gentlemen, I suppose you'd think it a hard story, but it's none the less a fact, that I served every remaining one of those nineteen sharks in the same fashion. They all came up to me, one by one, regularly and in order, and I scooped their eyes out, and gave them a shove, and they went off

into deep water, just like so many lambs. By the time I had scooped out and blinded a couple of dozen of them, they began to seem so scarce that I thought I would swim for the island, and fight the rest for fun, on the way; but just then, Tim Titus hove in sight, and it had got to be almost dark, and I concluded to get aboard and rest myself."

XVIII.

A BEAR STORY.

"WHAT a lie!" growled Daniel, as soon as the shark story was ended.

"Have my doubts;" suggested the somnolent Peter Probasco, with all the solemnity of a man who knows his situation; at the same time shaking his head and spilling his liquor.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!" roared all the rest of the boys together.

"Is he done?" asked Raynor Rock.

"How many shirks was there?" cried long John, putting in his unusual lingual oar.

"That story puts me in mind," said Venus Raynor, "about what I've heerd tell on Ebenezer

Smith, at the time he went down to the North Pole on a walen' voyage."

"Now look out for a screamer," laughed out Raynor Rock, refilling his pipe. "Stand by, Mr. Cypress, to let the sheet go."

"Is there anything uncommon about that yarn, Venus?"

"Oncommon! well, I expect it's putty smart and oncommon for a man to go to sea with a bear, all alone, on a bare cake of ice. Captain Smith's woman used to say she couldn't bear to think on't."

"Tell us the whole of that, Venus," said Ned—"that is, if it is true. Mine was—the whole of it—although Peter has his doubts."

"I can't tell it as well as Zoph can; but I've no 'jections to tell it my way, no how. So, here goes—that's great brandy, Mr. Cypress." There was a gurgling sound of "something-to-take," running.

"Well, they was down into Baffin's Bay, or some other o' them cold Norwegen bays at the north, where the rain freezes as it comes down, and stands up in the air, on winter mornens, like great mountens o' ice, all in streaks. Well, the schooner was layen at anchor, and all the hands was out into the small boats, looken out for wales—all

except the capting, who said he wa'n't very well that day. Well, he was walken up and down, on deck, smoken and thinking, I expect, mostly, when all of a sudden he reckoned he see one o' them big white bears—polar bears, you know—big as thunder—with long teeth. He reckoned he see one on 'em sclumpen along on a great cake o' ice, that lay on the leeward side of the bay, up agin the bank. The old capting wanted to kill one o' them varments most wonderful, but he never lucked to get a chance. Now tho', he thought, the time had come for him to walk into one on 'em at laast, and fix his mutton for him right. So he run forrard and lay hold onto a small skiff, that was layen near the forc'stal, and run her out and launched her; then he tuk a drink, and—here's luck—and put in a stiff load of powder, a couple of balls, and jumped in, and pulled away for the ice.

"It wa'n't long 'fore he got 'cross the bay, for it was a narrer piece of water—not more than haaf a mile wide—and then he got out on to the ice. It was a smart and large cake, and the bear was 'way down to the tother end on it, by the edge o' the water. So, he walked fust strut along, and then when he got putty cloast he

walked round catecorned-like—like's if he was drivin' for a plain plover—so that the bear wouldn't think he was comen arter him, and he dragged himself along on his hands and knees, low down, mostly. Well, the bear didn't seem to mind him none, and he got up within 'bout fifty yards on him, and then he looked so savage and big—the bear did—that the captain stopped and rested on his knees, and put up his gun, and was agoin to shoot. But just then the bear turned round and snuffed up the captin—just as one of Lif's hounds snuffs up an old buck, Mr. Cypress—and begun to walk towards him, slowly like. He come along, the captin said, clump, clump, very slow, and made the ice bend and crack again under him, so that the water come up and putty much kivered it all over. Well, there the captin was all the time squat on his knees, with his gun pinted, waiten for the varment to come up, and his knees and legs was mighty cold by means of the water that the bear riz on the ice as I was mentionen. At last the bear seemed to make up his mind how the captin *would* taste, and so he left off walkin' slow, and started off on a smart swift trot, right towards the old man, with his mouth wide open, roaren, and his tail sticken out stiff. The captin

kept still, looken out all the time putty sharp, I should say, till the beast got within about ten yards on him, and then he let him have it. He aimed right at the fleshy part of his heart, but the bear dodged at the flash, and rared up, and the balls went into his two hind legs, just by the jynt, one into each, and broke the thigh bones smack off, so that he went right down aft, on the ice, thump, on his hind quarters, with nothen standen but his fore legs, and his head riz up, a growlen at the captin. When the old man see him down, and tryen to slide along the ice to get his revenge, likely, thinks he to himself, thinks he, I might as well get up and go and cut that ere creter's throat. So he tuk out his knife and opened it.

"But when he started to get up, he found, to his astonishment, that he was fruz fast to the ice. Don't laugh: it's a fact; there an't no doubt. The water, you see, had been round him a smart and long while, whilst he was waiten for the bear, and it's wonderful cold in them regions, as I was sayen, and you'll freeze in a minit if you don't keep moven about smartly. So the captin he strained first one leg, and then he strained tother, but he couldn't move 'em none. They was both fruz fast into the ice, about an inch and a half deep, from knee to

toe, tight as a Jersey oyster perryauger on a mud flat at low water. So he laid down his gun, and looked at the bear, and doubled up his fists.

"'Come on, you bloody varmint,' says the old man, as the bear swalloped along on his hinder eend, comen at him.

"He kept getten weaker, tho,' and comen slower and slower all the time, so that at last, he didn't seem to move none; and directly, when he'd got so near that the captin could jist give him a dig in the nose by reachen forrard putty smart and far, the captin see that the beast was fruz fast too, nor he couldn't move a step further forrard no ways. Then the captin burst out a laughen, and clapped his hands down on to his thighs, and roared. The bear seemed to be most onmighty mad at the old man's fun, and set up such a growlen that what should come to pass, but the ice cracks and breaks all around the captin and the bear, down to the water's edge, and the wind jist then a shiften, and comen off shore, away they floated on a cake of ice about ten by six, off to sea, without the darned a biscot or a quart o' liquor to stand 'em on the cruise! There they sot, the bear and the captin, just so near that when they both reached forrards, they could jist about touch noses,

and nother one not able to move any part on him, only excepten his upper part and fore paws."

"By jolly! that was rather a critical predicament, Venus," cried Ned, buttoning his coat. "I should have thought that the captain's nose and ears and hands would have been frozen too."

"That's quite naytr'l to suppose, Sir, but you see the bear kept him warm in the upper parts, by being so cloast to him, and breathen hard and hot on the old man whenever he growled at him. Them polar bears is wonderful hardy animals, and has a monstrous deal o' heat into 'em, by means of their bein' able to stand such cold climates, I expect. And so the captin knowed this, and whenever he felt chilly, he just tuk up his ramrod and stirred up the old rascal, and made him roar and squeal, and then the hot breath would come pouren out all over the captin, and made the air quite moderat and pleasant."

"Well, go on, Venus. Take another horn first."

"Well, there a'nt much more on't. Off they went to sea, and sometimes the wind druv 'em nothe, and then agin it druv 'em southe, but they went southe mostly; and so it went on until they were out about three weeks. So at last, one afternoon—"

"But, Venus, stop: tell us, in the name of wonder, how did the captain contrive to support life all this time?"

"Why, Sir, to be sure, it was a hard kind o' life to support, but a hardy man will get used to almost—"

"No, no: what did he eat? what did he feed on?"

"O—O—I'd liked to've skipped that ere. Why, Sir, I've heerd different accounts as to that. Uncle Obe Verity told me he reckoned the captin cut off one of the bear's paws, when he lay stretched out asleep one day, with his jack-knife, and sucked that for fodder, and they say there's a smart deal o' nourishment in a white bear's foot. But if I may be allowed to spend my 'pinion, I should say my old man's account is the rightest, and that's—what's as follows. You see after they'd been out three days abouts, they begun to grow kind o' hungry, and then they got friendly, for misery loves company, you know; and the captin said the bear looked at him several times, very sorrowful, as much as to say, 'Captin, what the devil shall we do?' Well, one day they was sitten looken at each other, with the tears ready to burst out o' their eyes, when all of a hurry, somethin' come floppen

up out o' the water onto the ice. The captin looked and see it was a seal. The bear's eyes kindled up as he looked at it, and then, the captin said, he giv him a wink to keep still. So there they sot, still as starch, till the seal not thinken nothin' o' them no more nor if they was dead, walked right up between 'em. Then slump! went down old whitey's nails into the fish's flesh, and the captin run his jack-knife into the tender loin. The seal soon got his bitters, and the captin cut a big hunk off the tale eend, and put it behind him, out o' the bear's reach, and then he felt smart and comfortable, for he had stores enough for a long cruise, though the bear couldn't say so much for himself.

"Well, the bear, by course, soon run out o' provisions, and had to put himself onto short allowance; and then he begun to show his natural temper. He first stretched himself out as far as he could go, and tried to hook the captin's piece o' seal, but when he found he couldn't reach that, he begun to blow and yell. Then he'd rare up and roar, and try to get himself clear from the ice. But mostly he rared up and roared, and pounded his big paws and head upon the ice, till by-and-by (jist as the captin said he expected) the ice

cracked in two agin, and split right through between the bear and the captin and there they was on two different pieces o' ice, the captin and the bear! The old man said he raaly felt sorry at parten company, and when the cake split and separate, he cut off about a haaf o' pound o' seal and chucked it to the bear. But either because it wan't enough for him, or else on account o' his feelen bad at the captin's goen, the beast wouldn't touch it to eat it, and he laid it down, and growled and moaned over it quite pitiful. Well, off they went, one, one way, and t'other 'nother way, both feel'n pretty bad, I expect. After a while the captin got smart and cold, and felt mighty lonesome, and he said he raaly thought he'd a gi'n in and died, if they hadn't pick'd him up that arternoon."

"Who picked him up, Venus?"

"Who? a codfish craft off o' Newfoundland, I expect. They didn't know what to make o' him when they first see him slingen up his hat for 'em. But they got out all their boats, and took a small swivel and a couple o' muskets aboard, and started off—expecten it was the sea-sarpent, or an old maremaid. They wouldn't believe it was a man, until he'd told 'em all about it, and then they didn't hardly believe it nuther; and they cut him out o'

the ice and tuk him aboard their vessel, and rubbed his legs with ile o' vitrol; but it was a long time afore they come to."

"Didn't they hurt him badly in cutting him out, Venus?"

"No, Sir, I believe not; not so bad as one might s'pose: for you see he'd been stuck in so long, that the circulaten on his blood had kind o' rotted the ice that was right next to him, and when they begun to cut, it crack'd off putty smart and easy, and he come out whole like a hard biled egg."

"What became of the bear?"

"Can't say as to that, what became o' him. He went off to sea somewheres, I expect. I should like to know, myself, how the varment got' along right well, for it was kind in him to let the captin have the biggest haaf o' the seal, any how. That's all, boys. How many's asleep?"

XIX.

THE BEST-NATURED MAN IN THE WORLD.*

A YIELDING temper, when not carefully watched and curbed, is one of the most dangerous of faults. Like unregulated generosity, it is apt to carry its owner into a thousand difficulties, and, too frequently, to hurry him into vice, if not into crimes. But as it is of advantage to others while inflicting injury upon its possessor, it has, by the common consent of mankind, received a fine name, which covers its follies and promotes its growth. This easiness of disposition, which is a compound of indolence, vanity, and irresolution, is known and applauded as "good-nature;" and, to have reached the superlative

* By J. C. Neal.

degree, so as to be called the "best-natured fellow in the world—almost too good-natured for his own good," is regarded as a lofty merit.

The "best-natured fellow in the world" is merely a convenience; very useful to others, but worse than useless to himself. He is the bridge across the brook, and men walk over him. He is the wandering pony of the Pampas, seeking his own provender, yet ridden by those who contribute not to his support. He giveth up all the sunshine, and hath nothing but chilling shade for himself. He waiteth at the table of the world, serveth the guests, who clear the board, and, for food and pay, give him fine words, which culinary research hath long since ascertained cannot be used with profit, even in the buttering of parsnips. He is, in fact, an appendage, not an individuality; and when worn out, as he soon must be, is thrown aside to make room for another, if another can be had. Such is the result of excessive compliance and obsequious good-nature. It plundereth a man of his spine, and converteth him into a flexile willow, to be bent and twisted as his companions choose, and, should it please them, to be wreathed into a fish-basket.

Are there any who doubt of this? Let them inquire for one Leniter Salix, and ask his opinion.

Leniter may be ragged, but his philosophy has not so many holes in it as might be inferred from the state of his wardrobe. Nay, it is the more perfect on that account; a knowledge of the world penetrates the more easily when, from defective apparel, we approach the nearer to our original selves. Leniter's hat is crownless, and the clear light of knowledge streams without impediment upon his brain. He is not bound up in the strait jacket of prejudice, for he long since pawned his solitary vest, and his coat, made for a Goliath, hangs about him as loosely as a politician's principles, or as the purser's shirt in the poetical comparison. Salix has so long bumped his head against a stone wall, that he has knocked a hole in it, and like Cooke, the tragedian, sees through his error. He has speculated as extensively in experience as if it were town lots. The quantity of that article he has purchased, could it be made tangible, would freight a seventy-four;—were it convertible into cash, Crœsus would be a Chelsea pensioner to Salix. But unluckily for him, there are stages in life when experience itself is more ornamental than useful. When, to use a forcible expression—when a man is "done,"—it matters not whether he has as much experience as Samson had hair, or as Bergami had whisker—he

can do no more. Salix has been in his time so much pestered with *duns,* "hateful to gods and men," that he is *done* himself.

"The sun was rushing down the west," as Banim has it, attending to its own business, and, by that means, shedding benefit upon the world, when Leniter Salix was seen in front of a little grocery, the *locale* of which shall be nameless, sitting dejectedly upon a keg of mackerel, number 2. He had been "the best-natured fellow in the world," but, as the geologists say, he was in a state of transition, and was rapidly becoming up to *trap.* At all events, he had his nose to the grindstone, an operation which should make men keen. He was houseless, homeless, penniless, and the grocery man had asked him to keep an eye upon the dog, for fear of the midsummer catastrophe which awaits such animals when their snouts are not in a bird-cage. This service was to be recompensed with a cracker, and a glass of what the shopman was pleased to call *racky mirackilis,* a fluid sometimes termed "railroad," from the rapidity with which it hurries men to the end of their journey. Like many of the best-natured fellows in the world, Salix, by way of being a capital companion, and of not being different from others, had acquired rather

a partiality for riding on this "railroad," and he agreed to keep his trigger eye on the dog.

"That's right, Salix. I always knowed you were the best-natured fellow in the world."

"H-u-m-p-s-e!" sighed Salix, in a prolonged, plaintive, uncertain manner, as if he admitted the fact, but doubted the honour; "h-u-m-p-s-e! but, if it wasn't for the railroad, which is good for my complaint, because I take it internally to drive out the perspiration, I've a sort of a notion Carlo might take care of himself. There's the dog playing about without his muzzle, just because I'm good-natured; there's Timpkins at work making money inside, instead of watching his own whelp, just because I'm good-natured; and I'm to sit here doing nothing instead of going to get a little job a man promised me down town, just because I'm good-natured. I can't see exactly what's the use of it to me. It's pretty much like having a bed of your own, and letting other people sleep in it, soft, while you sleep on the bare floor, hard. It wouldn't be so bad if you could have half, or quarter of the bed; but no—these good friends of mine, as I may say, turn in, take it all, roll themselves up in the kivering, and won't let us have a bit of sheet to mollify the white pine sacking bottom, the which

pleasant to whittle with a sharp knife—quite soft enough for that purpose—but the which is not the pink of feather-beds. I don't like it—I'm getting tired."

The brow of Salix began to blacken—therein having decidedly the advantage of his boots, which could neither blacken themselves, nor prevail on their master to do it—when Mrs. Timpkins, the shopman's wife, popped out with a child in her arms, and three more trapesing after her.

"Law, Salix, how-dee-doo? I'm so glad—I know you're the best-natured creature in the world. Jist hold little Biddy a while, and keep an eye on t'other young 'uns—you're such a nurse—he! he! he!—so busy—ain't got no girl—so busy washing—most tea time—he! he! he! Salix."

Mrs. Timpkins disappeared, Biddy remained in the arms of Salix, and "t'other young 'uns" raced about with the dog. The trigger eye was compelled to invoke the aid of its coadjutor.

"Whew!" whistled Salix; "the quantity of pork they give in this part of the town for a shilling is amazin'—I'm so good-natured! That railroad will be well earnt any how. I'm beginning to think it's queer there ain't more good-natured people about besides me—I'm a sort of mayor and corpo-

ration all myself in this business. It's a monopoly where the profit's all loss. Now, for instance, these Timpkinses won't ask me to tea, because I'm ragged; but they ar'n't a bit too proud to ask me to play child's nurse and dog's uncle—they won't lend me any money, because I can't pay, and they're persimmony and sour about cash concerns—and they won't let me have time to earn any money, and get good clothes—that's because I'm so good-natured. I've a good mind to strike, and be sassy."

"Hallo! Salix, my good fellow!" said a man, on a horse, as he rode up; "you're the very chap I'm looking for. As I says to my old woman, says I, Leniter Salix is the wholesoul'dest chap I ever did see. There's nothing he won't do for a friend, and I'll never forget him, if I was to live as old as Methuselah."

Salix smiled — Hannibal softened rocks with vinegar, but the stranger melted the ice of our hero's resolution with praise. Salix walked towards him, holding the child with one hand as he extended the other for a friendly shake.

"You're the best-natured fellow in the world, Salix," ejaculated the stranger, as he leaped from the saddle, and hung the reins upon Salix's extended

fingers, instead of shaking hands with him; "you're the best-natured fellow in the world Just hold my horse a minute. I'll be back in a jiffey, Salix; in ess than half an hour," said the dismounted rider, as he shot round the corner.

"If that ain't cutting it fat, I'll be darned!" growled Salix, as soon as he had recovered from his breathless amazement, and had gazed from dog to babe—from horse to children.

"Mr. Salix," screamed Miss Tabitha Gadabout from the next house, "I'm just running over to Timpson's place. Keep an eye on my street door—back in a minute."

She flew across the street, and as she went, the words "best natured-soul alive" were heard upon the breeze.

"That's considerable fatter—it's as fat as show beef," said Salix. "How many eyes has a good-natured fellow got, anyhow? Three of mine's in use a'ready. The good-natureder you are, the more eyes you have, I s'pose. That job up town's jobbed without me, and where I'm to sleep, or to eat my supper, it's not the easiest thing in the world to tell. Ain't paid my board this six months, I'm so good-natured; and the old woman's so good-natured, she said I needn't come back. These

Timpkinses and all of 'em are ready enough at asking me to do things, but when I ask them—There, that dog's off, and the ketchers are coming—Carlo! Carlo!"

The baby began squalling, and the horse grew restive, the dog scampered into the very teeth of danger; and the three little Timpkinses, who could locomote, went scrabbling, in different directions, into all sorts of mischief, until finally one of them pitched head foremost into a cellar.

Salix grew furious.

"Whoa, pony!—hush, you infernal brat!—here, Carlo!—Thunder and crockery!—there's a young Timpkins smashed and spoilt!—knocked into a cocked hat!"

"Mr. Salix!" shouted a boy, from the other side of the way, "when you're done that 'ere, mammy says if you won't go a little narrand for her, you're so good-nater'd."

There are moments when calamity nerves us; when wild frenzy congeals into calm resolve; as one may see by penning a cat in a corner. It is then that the coward fights; that the oppressed strikes at the life of the oppressor. That moment had come to Salix. He stood bolt upright, as cold and as straight as an icicle. His good-nature

might be seen to drop from him in two pieces, like Cinderella's kitchen garments in the opera. He laid Biddy Timpkins on the top of the barrel, released the horse, giving him a vigorous kick, which sent him flying down the street, and strode indignantly away, leaving Carlo, Miss Gadabout's house, and all other matters in his charge, to the guardianship of chance.

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The last time Salix was seen in the busy haunts of men, he looked the very incarnation of gloom and despair. His very coat had gone to relieve his necessities, and he wandered slowly and dejectedly about, relieving the workings of his perturbed spirit by kicking whatever fell in his way.

"I'm done," soliloquized he; "pardenership between me and good-nature is this day dissolved, and all persons indebted will please to settle with the undersigned, who alone is authorized. Yes, there's a good many indebted, and it's high time to dissolve, when your pardener has sold all the goods and spent all the money. Once I had a little shop —ah! wasn't it nice?—plenty of goods and plenty of business. But then comes one troop of fellows, and they wanted tick—I'm so good-natured; then comes another set of chaps, who didn't let bashful-

ness stand in their way a minute; they sailed a good deal nearer the wind, and wanted to borry money—I'm so good-natured; and more asked me to go security. These fellows were always very particular friends of mine, and got what they asked for; but I was a very particular friend of theirs, and couldn't get it back. It was one of the good rules that won't work both ways; and I, somehow or other, was at the wrong end of it, for it wouldn't work my way at all. There's few rules that will, barring substraction, and division, and alligation, when our folks allegated against me that I wouldn't come to no good. All the cypherin' I could ever do made more come to little, and little come to less; and yet, as I said afore, I had a good many assistants too.

"Business kept pretty fair; but I wasn't cured. Because I was good-natured, I had to go with 'em frolicking, tea-partying, excursioning, and busting; and for the same reason, I was always appinted treasurer to make the distribution when there wasn't a cent of surplus revenue in the treasury, but my own. It was my job to pay all the bills. Yes, it was always 'Salix, you know me'—'Salix, pony up at the bar, and lend us a levy'—'Salix always shells out like a gentleman.' Oh, to be sure!

and why not?—now I'm shelled out myself—first out of my shop by old *venditioni exponas*, at the State House—old *fiery fash 'us* to me directed. But they didn't direct him soon enough, for he only got the fixtures. The goods had gone out on a bust long before I busted. Next, I was shelled out of my boarding house; and now," (with a lugubrious glance at his shirt and pantaloons,) "I'm nearly shelled out of my clothes. It's a good thing they can't easy shell me out of my skin, or they would, and let me catch my death of cold. I'm a mere shell-fish—an oyster with the kivers off.

"But, it was always so—when I was a little boy, they coaxed all my pennies out of me; coaxed me to take all the jawings, and all the hidings, and to go first into all sorts of scrapes, and precious scrapings they used to be. I wonder if there isn't two kinds of people—one kind that's made to chaw up t'other kind, and t'other kind that's made to be chawed up by one kind?—cat-kind of people, and mouse-kind of people? I guess there is. I'm very much of a mouse myself.

"What I want to know is, what's to become of me. I've spent all I had in getting my eddication. Learnin', they say, is better than houses and lands. I wonder if anybody will swap some house and land

with me for mine? I'd go it even and ask no boot. They should have it at prime cost; but they won't; and I begin to be afraid I'll have to get married, or 'list in the marines. That's what most people do when they've nothing to do."

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What became of Leniter Salix immediately, is immaterial; what will become of him eventually is clear enough. His story is one acting every day, and, though grotesquely sketched, is an evidence of the danger of an accommodating disposition when not regulated by prudence. The softness of "the best-natured fellow in the world" requires a large admixture of hardening alloy to give it the proper temper.

XX.

CHUNKEY'S FIGHT WITH THE PANTHERS.

Co Chunk! went Jem into the middle of the floor; jest at the crack off day (Jem is a labor-savin' man about ondressing when he goes to bed). He commenced chunkin' the fire, then "ah!" says he, feelin' for the tin cup. Presently he went to the door, and shouted to the foreman:

"Sound that horn, Hembry. Tell the niggars in the quarter to lumber the hollar back agin to the kitchen, for a hurricane has surely broke loose!"

Then "ah!" says he again, and in he comes.

"Chunkey!" says he.

"What's busted, Jem?"

"North pole has busted, and no mistake. The ground is kivered with snow."

I sprung up, and sure enough thar was the snow, the first that ever fell in the creek, jest follerin' civilization. I knowed thar'd be howlin', smashin' of teeth, burnin' of brimstone, and a worryin' of the stranger, on the creek to-day, and so, I reckon, did the dogs, 'cause when Hembry blowed the horn, they come a shoutin' like so many imps. Jest imagin, Captin, thirty full-grown dogs, a cross of the blood on the old Virginny foxhound, keen as a bowyer, and adzactly of Jem's opinion, signifying as plain as they could, if huntin's goin' on, they'd take a chance.

Well, we splurged about till breakfast-time, gettin' up and cleanin' guns, and countin' balls, and dividin' powder.

"Bring out them bar-sassage and deer melts," says Jem; "and then, Chunkey, we'll locomotion."

His eyes all the time lookin' like a live coal of fire, and every muscle jumpin' for joy.

"Look out, bar," says he.

"Say low, and keep dark, panter," says I.

"Deer, don't you come nigh me," says Jem, and then he commenced singin':

> "Oh, rain come wet me, sun come dry me,
> Take care, white man, don't come nigh me,"

and strikin' a few flourishes of the goin' and comin' double shuffle.

"Hurrah for Sky Lake," says I.

"Hurrah for the Forkin' Cypress drive," says Jem, takin' a drink, and cuttin' a few pigeon-wings with his left leg. "Now mind, Chunkey, no deer or wild turkey, no hogs or cub—nothin' but bar or panter."

"Agreed," says I, and then we budged.

Captin, you've hearn Jem say, he's hard of hearin'? Well, he is sometimes, 'specially when he don't want to hear; but that mornin' he was wide awake all over, and could have hearn an old he bar grunt in a thunder-storm.

"I'll carry the horn, Chunkey. If you blow, I can't hear you; and when I want you, I'll blow, and you can."

I didn't 'spect anything then, but you'll see.

Well, we had our big guns, them the govenor gin us; they throw twelve to the pound, and war

made by that man what lives in Louisville; what's his name?

He promised to send me a deer-gun gratis for two young panters, but he ain't done it.

Jem's gun war in bar order that mornin', and if you'd jest say varment above your breath, click it would go, cockin' itself.

Lots of deer war 'tinually passin'; that day some on 'em stood feedin' jist as careless as a loafer with a full belly; they kno'ed they war safe. The day was mighty clear and yaller; it warn't very cold, but still the snow diddent melt, but floated sorter like turkey-feathers in the wind, and in the tall cane it fell round us like a fog.

When we got to the Forkin' Cypress, Sol soon had a camp made; and I and Jem started to look for sign.

We hadn't been gone long, when I hearn Jem's horn, and made to him; thar war a sign at the foot of a tree, and thar war his track in the snow.

"Shall we nail him, Chunkey?"

"In course," says I.

Well, we hollered to Sol, to let the dogs loose. Presently, I hearn 'em give some short licks, and I knowed he war up.

"Thar's a cry for you."

Away they go further and further, presently you can jest hear 'em, and then they are clean gone. I hearn Jem shoutin' awhile, and then his mouth is lost too. I started on, spectin' to meet 'em comin' back, and in about an hour I hearn Jem's voice :

"Who-whoop!"

"Ah, bar!" says I, "whar's your friends?"

I soon hearn Jem agin, and presently I hearn the dogs, like the ringin' of a cow-bell, a long way off. They come up the ridge, and then bore off to the thick cane on my right. Then they hushed awhile, and I knoed they's a fightin'.

Look out, dogs; thar, they are gwyine again —no, here they comes! Lay low, and keep dark.

I put down another ball, and stood for him. I heard the cane crackin', and cocked my gun. Here he comes—here he is. I hear him snortin', wake snakes. Ain't that lumberin'? Thar, they've got him again, and now the fur flies. I crawled thro' the cane, trying to get a shot afore the dogs seen me. Thar they is, but which is he?

Bang! whiff, whiff, said the bar, and with that every dog jumped him. The canes a crackin', and the dogs a hollerin'. I jerked my bowyer and

plunged in, and thar they war hung togather like a swarm of bees. I felt the har risin' on my head, and the blood ticklin' the end of my fingers. I crept up behind him and he war done fightin'. He haddent got a hundred yards from the place whar I'd shot him. It war a death shot, and blinded him, and thar side of him lay "Singer" and "Constitutional," two of the best dogs in Jem's pack. I giv a shout, and Jem answered. Presently I hearn him cummin', blowin' like a steam-boat, and mad as anything; he always gits mad when he's tired, and when he seen them dead dogs, he commenced breathin' mighty hard, and the veins in his neck was as big as fingers; we warn't more than a quarter and a half from the camp, whar we soon got, both mighty hungry and tired. Sol cooked the liver jest to the right pint, and we spent the balance of the evenin' in singin', braggin', and eatin' sparribs roasted brown, till we went to sleep.

Next mornin' when we waked, it was sorter cloudy and warm too. The wind war blowin' mightily.

"Now, Chunkey, let's have a panter to-day, *or nothin'*."

"All *sot*," says I.

Well, arter breakfast Jem says, "Chunkey, you

must take the right side the Lake, and I'll take the 'yether, till we meet—and, Chunkey, you must *rush*; it ain't more nor eight miles round, but your side *may* seem long, as you ain't usen to the ground. Let's licker out of *my* gourd, you ain't got more nor you'll want. Keep your eye skinned for sign, and listen for my horn!"

"Hump yourself," says I, and we both darted—*well*; I worked my passage through cane, palmetto, and vines, until I war tired—I haddent hearn Jem's horn, and pushed on the harder to meet him; every once and a while I'd think *hears the turn of the Lake*, but when I'd git to the place, *thar it was* stretchin' out as big as ever. Once I thought I hearn Jem's horn, but couldent quite make it out. I kept movin'; hours passed and no Jem or end of the Lake; I'd seen lots of bar and panter sign, lots of deer, and more swan, wild-goose, and duck, than you ever will see; but I paid no attention to 'em, as I 'spected I'd taken some wrong arm of the Lake and war lost. It war gettin' towards night, and I 'spected I'd have to sleep by myself, but you know I diddent mind that, as I war used to it. But it war the first time in my life that I'd bin lost, and that *did* pester me mightily. Well, Sir, after studyin' awhile, I thought I'd better put back

towards the camp, mighty tired and discouraged. I then throw'd my gourd round to take a drop of liker, and it were *filled with water!* fact!—Thinks I, Chunkey, you must have been *mighty* drunk last night; that made me sorter low-spirited like a a 'oman, and my heart war weak as water. It had commenced gittin' sorter dark; the wind were blowin' and groanin' through the trees and rivers, and the black clouds were flyin', and I war goin' along sorter oneasy and cross-grained, when *a panter yelled out, close to me!* I turned with my gun cocked, but couldent see it; presently I hearn it again, and out it come, and then another! "Is that you?" said I, takin' a crack and missin' to a sartainty; and away they darted through the cane. I drap'd my gun to load, and by the great Jackson, there warn't a full load of powder in my gourd!—I loaded *mighty* carefully, and started on to pick out some holler tree to sleep in. Every once and awhile I'd git a glimpse of the panters on my trail. "Panters," says I, "I'll make a child's bargain with you; if you will let *me* alone, *you* may *golong*; —and if you don't, here's a ball into the head of one of ye'er, and this knife!"—*hush*, if my knife warn't gone, I wish I may never taste bar's meat? I raised my arm, trimblin' like a leaf, and says I,

"Jem!—*I'll have your melt!*" Well, I *war* in trouble sure!—I thought I war on the *Tchule a Leta Lake*, and *witched*.

Well I did! Oh, you may larph, but jist imagin' *yourself* lost in the cane on Sky Lake, (the cane on Sky Lake *is some*—thirty miles long, from one to three miles wide, thick as the har on a dog's back, and about thirty feet high!) out of licker, out of powder, your knife gone, the ground kivered with snow, you very hungry and tired, *and two panters follerin' your trail*, and you'd think you was bewitched too!

Well, here they come, never lettin' on, but makin' arrangements to have my skalp that night; I never lettin' on, but detarmin'd they shouldent. The har had been standin' on my head for more nor an hour, and the sweat were gist *rollin'* off me, and that satisfied me a fight war a brewin' atween me and the panters! I stopped two or three times, thinkin' they's gone, but presently hear they'd come, creepin' along through the cane, and soon as they'd see me they stop, lay down, roll over and twirl their tails about like kittens playin'; I'd then shout, shake the cane, and away they'd go. Oh, they thought they had me! *In course they did*, and I detarmined with myself, if they *did let me go*, if they diddent

attack an onarmed man, alone and lost, without licker, dogs, powder or knife, that the very fust time I got a panter up a tree, with my whole pack at the root, my licker gourd full, and I half full, my twelve-to-the-pound-yager loaded, and my knife in shavin' order, I'd let *him* go! Yes, *'tisn't Chantrey if I diddent!*

But what did *they* care? They'd no more feelin' than a pine-stump! I know'd it woulddent do to risk a fight in the cane, and pushed on to find an open place whar I could make sure of my one load, and rely on my gun barrel arter. I soon found a place whar the cane drifted, and *thar* I determined to stand and fight it out! Presently here they come; and if a stranger had seen 'em, he'd a thought they were playin'! They'd jump and squat, and bend their backs, lay down and roll, and grin like puppys;—*they kept gittin' nearer and nearer,* and it wer gettin' dark, and I know'd I must let drive at the old *he,* 'afore it got so dark I coulddent see my sights; so I jist dropped on one knee to make sure, and when I raised my gun, I were all in a trimble! I know'd *that* woulddent do, and *ris!*

"You are witched, Chunkey, sure and sartin'," said I. Arter bracin' myself, I raised up agin and

fired! One on 'em sprung into the air and gin a yell, and the other bounded towards me like a streak! Lightin' close to me, it squatted to the ground and commenced creepin' towards me—its years laid back, its eyes turnin' green, and sorter swimmin' round like, and the end of its tail twistin' like a snake. I felt light as a cork, and strong as a buffalo. I seen her commence slippin' her legs under her, and knew she were gwine to spring. I throw'd back my gun to gin it to her, as she come; the lick I aimed at her head struck across the shoulders and back without doing any harm, *and she had me!*—Rip, rip, rip—and 'way went my blanket, coat, and britches. She sunk her teeth into my shoulder, her green eyes were close to mine, and the froth from her mouth were flyin' in my face!! *Moses!* how fast she *did* fight! I felt the warm blood runnin' down my side—I seen she were arter *my* throat! and with that I grabbed *hern*, and commenced pourin' it into her side with my fist, like cats-a-fightin!—Rip, rip, she'd take me, —diff, slam, bang, I'd gin it to her—she fightin' for her *supper*, I fightin' for my *life!* Why, in course it war an onequal fight, but she ris it! Well, we had it round and round, sometimes one, and then yother on top, she a growlin' and I a

gruntin'! We had both commenced gittin' mighty tired, and presently she made a spring, *tryin' to git away!* Arter *that* thar wan't no mortal chance for her! Cause why, she were whipped! I'd sorter been thinkin' about sayin'

"Now I lay me down to sleep,"

but I know'd if I commenced it would put her in heart, and she'd riddle me in a minit, and when *she* hollered *nuff*, I were glad to my shoe soles, and had sich confidence in whippin' the fight, that *I offered two to one on Chunkey,* but no takers!

"Oh, ho!" says I, a hittin' her a lick every time I spoke, "you are willin' to quit even and divide stakes, are you?" and then round and round we went agin! You could have hearn us blow a quarter, but presently she made a *big struggle* and broke my hold! I fell one way, and she the other! She darted into the cane, and that's the last time I ever hearn of *that* panter!!!

When I sorter come to myself, I war struttin' and *thunderin'* like a big he-gobler, and then I commenced examinin' to see what harm she'd done me; I war bit powerful bad in the shoulder and arm—

jist look at them scars!—and I were cut into solid whip-strings; but when I found thar warn't no danger of its *killin'* me, I set in to braggin'. "Oh, you ain't dead yet, Chunkey!" says I, "if you are sorter wusted, and have whipped a panter in a fair fight, and *no* gougin';" and then I *cock a doodle dood* a spell, for joy!

When I looked round, *thar* sot the old he, a lickin' the blood from his breast! I'd shot him right through the breast, but sorter slantindickler, breakin' his shoulder blade into a perfect smash. I walked up to him:

"Howdy, panter? how do you do? how *is* missis panter, and the little panters? how is your consarns in gineral? Did you ever hearn tell of the man they calls 'Chunkey?' born in Kaintuck and raised in Mississippi? death on a bar, and *smartly* in a panter fight? If you diddent, look, for *I'm he!* I kills bars, whips panters in a fair fight; I walks the water, I out-bellars the thunder, and when I gets hot, the Mississippi hides itself! I—I—Oh, you thought you *had* me, did you?—*drot you!* But *you* are a gone sucker, now. I'll have your melt, if I never gits home, so—"

"Look out, Capting! here's the place! make

the skift fast to that cyprus log. Take care them oars, Abe! Spring out and oncupple the dogs, and take car they don't knock them guns overboard. Now, Capting, we will have a deer movin' afore you can say—Chunkey."

XXI.

A BULLY BOAT, AND A BRAG CAPTAIN.

A STORY OF STEAM-BOAT LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

Does any one remember the 'Caravan?' She was what would now be considered a slow boat; *then* (1827) she was regularly advertised as the "fast-running," &c. Her regular trips from New Orleans to Natchez were usually made in from six to eight days; a trip made by her in five days was considered remarkable. A voyage from New Orleans to Vicksburg and back, including stoppages, generally entitled the officers and crew to a month's wages. Whether the 'Caravan' ever achieved the feat of a voyage to the Falls (Louisville), I have

never learned; if she did, she must have "had a time of it!"

It was my fate to take passage in this boat. The captain was a good-natured, easy-going man, careful of the comfort of his passengers, and exceedingly fond of the *game of brag*. We had been out a little more than five days, and we were in hopes of seeing the bluffs of Natchez on the next day. Our wood was getting low, and night coming on. The pilot on duty *above* (the other pilot held three aces at the time, and was just calling out the captain, who "went it strong" on three kings) sent down word that the mate had reported the stock of wood reduced to half a cord. The worthy captain excused himself to the pilot, whose watch was *below*, and the two passengers who made up the party, and hurried to the deck, where he soon discovered, by the landmarks, that we were about half a mile from a wood-yard, which he said was situated "right round yonder point."

"But," muttered the captain, "I don't much like to take wood of the yellow-faced old scoundrel who owns it; he always charges a quarter of a dollar more than any one else; however, there's no other chance."

The boat was pushed to her utmost, and, in a

little less than an hour, when our fuel was about giving out, we made the point, and our cables were out and fastened to trees, alongside of a good-sized wood-pile.

"Hollo, Colonel! how d'ye sell your wood *this* time?"

A yellow-faced old gentleman, with a two-weeks' beard, strings over his shoulders holding up to his arm-pits a pair of copperas-coloured, linsey-woolsey pants, the legs of which reached a very little below the knee, shoes without stockings, a faded, broad-brimmed hat, which had once been black, and a pipe in his mouth, casting a glance at the empty guards of our boat, and uttering a grunt as she rose from fastening our "spring-line," answered:

"Why, Capting, we must charge you *three and a quarter* THIS *time.*"

"The d—l!" replied the Captain, (captains did swear a little in those days); "what's the odd *quarter* for, I should like to know? You only charged me *three* as I went down."

"Why, Capting," drawled out the wood-merchant, with a sort of leer on his yellow countenance, which clearly indicated that his wood was as good as sold, "wood's riz since you went down two weeks ago; besides you are awar' that you very seldom stop

going *down*; when you're going *up*, you're sometimes obleeged to give me a call, becaze the current's against you, and there's no other wood-yard for nine miles ahead; and if you happen to be nearly out of fooel, why—"

"Well, well," interrupted the Captain, "we'll take a few cords, under the circumstances," and he returned to his game of brag.

In about half an hour, we felt the 'Caravan' commence paddling again. Supper was over, and I retired to my upper berth, situated alongside, and overlooking the brag-table, where the Captain was deeply engaged, having now the *other* pilot as his principal opponent. We jogged on quietly, and seemed to be going at a good rate.

"How does the wood burn?" inquired the Captain of the mate, who was looking on at the game.

"'Tisn't of much account, I reckon," answered the mate; "it's cotton-wood, and most of it green at that—"

"Well, Thompson—(three aces again, stranger. I'll take that X and the small change, if you please —it's your deal)—Thompson, I say, we'd better take three or four cords at the next wood-yard; it can't be more than six miles from here; (two

aces and a bragger, with the ace! hand over those Vs.)"

The game went on, and the paddles kept moving. At eleven o'clock it was reported to the Captain that we were nearing the wood-yard, the light being distinctly seen by the pilot on duty.

"Head her in shore, then, and take in six cords, if it's good. See to it, Thompson; I can't very well leave the game now; it's getting right warm! This pilot's beating us all to smash."

The wooding completed, we paddled on again. The Captain seemed somewhat vexed when the mate informed him that the price was the same as at the last wood-yard, *three and a quarter;* but soon again became interested in the game.

From my upper berth (there was no state-rooms *then*) I could observe the movements of the players. All the contention appeared to be between the captain and the pilots, (the latter personages took it turn and turn about, steering and playing brag), one of them almost invariably winning, while the two passengers merely went through the ceremony of dealing, cutting, and paying up their "antics." They were anxious to *learn the game*—and they did learn it! Once in a while, indeed, seeing they had two aces and a bragger, they would venture a bet of

five or ten dollars; but they were always compelled to back out before the tremendous bragging of the captain or pilot; or if they *did* venture to "call out" on "two bullits and a bragger," they had the mortification to find one of the officers had the same kind of a hand, and were *more venerable!* Still, with all these disadvantages, they continued playing —they wanted to learn the game.

At two o'clock, the captain asked the mate how we were getting on.

"Oh, pretty glibly, Sir!" replied the mate; "we can scarcely tell what headway we *are* making, for we are obliged to keep the middle of the river, and there is the shadow of a fog rising. This wood seems rather better than that we took in at old yellow-face's, but we're nearly out again, and must be looking for more. I saw a light just ahead on the right—shall we hail?"

"Yes, yes," replied the Captain; "ring the bell, and ask 'em what's the price of wood up here. I've got you again; here's double kings."

I heard the bell and the pilot's hail:

"What's *your* price for wood?"

A youthful voice on the shore answered:

"Three *and* a quarter!"

"Hollo!" ejaculated the captain, who had just

lost the price of two cords to the pilot, the strangers suffering *some* at the same time, "three and a quarter again! Are we *never* to get to a cheaper country? Deal, Sir, if you please—better luck next time."

The other pilot's voice was again heard on deck:

"How much *have* you?"

"Only about ten cords, Sir," was the reply of the youthful salesman.

The Captain here told Thompson to take six cords, which would last till daylight, and again turned his attention to the game.

The pilots here changed places. *When did they sleep?* Wood taken in, the 'Caravan' again took her place in the middle of the stream, paddling on as usual. Day at length dawned, the brag-party broke up, and settlements were being made, during which operation the Captain's bragging propensities were exercised in cracking up the speed of his boat, which, by his reckoning, must have made at least sixty miles, and would have made many more if he could have procured good wood. It appears the two passengers, in their first lesson, had incidentally lost one hundred and twenty dollars. The Captain, as he rose to see about taking in some *good* wood, which he felt sure of obtaining, now he had got

above the level country, winked at his opponent, the pilot, with whom he had been on very bad terms during the progress of the game, and said, in an under tone:

"Forty a-piece for you, and I, and James (the other pilot) is not bad for one night."

I had risen, and went out with the Captain, to enjoy a view of the bluffs. There was just fog enough to prevent the vision taking in more than sixty yards, so I was disappointed in *my* expectation. We were nearing the shore for the purpose of looking for wood, the banks being invisible from the middle of the river.

"There it is!" exclaimed the Captain; "stop her!"

Ding, ding, ding! went the big bell, and the Captain hailed:

"Hollo! the wood-yard!"

"Hollo, yourself!" answered a squeaking female voice, which came from a woman with a petticoat over her shoulders in place of a shawl.

"What's the price of wood?"

"I think you ought to know the price by this time," answered the old lady in the petticoat; "it's three and a qua-a-rter! and now you know it."

"Three and the d—l!" broke in the Captain; "what, have you raised on *your* wood too? I'll give you three, and not a cent more."

"Well," replied the petticoat, "here comes the old man; *he'll* talk to you."

And, sure enough, out crept from the cottage the veritable faded hat, copperas-coloured pants, yellow countenance, and two weeks' beard we had seen the night before, and the same voice we had heard regulating the price of cotton-wood, squeaked out the following sentence, accompanied by the same leer of the same yellow countenance:

"Why, darn it all, Capting! there is but three or four cords left, and *since it's you,* I don't care if I *do* let you have it for *three, as you're a good customer!*"

After a quick glance at the landmarks around, the Captain bolted, and turned in to take some rest. The fact became apparent: the reader will probably have discovered it some time since, *that we had been wooding all night at the same wood-yard!*

XXII.

FYDGET FYXINGTON.*

THE doctrine, that "all is for the best," though cherished in the abstract, is but little practised. The world is much more addicted to its opposite. "All's for the worst" is a very common motto, and under its influence there are thousands who growl when they go to bed, and growl still louder when they get up; they growl at their breakfast, they growl at their dinner, they growl at their supper, and they growl between meals. Discontent is written in every feature of their visage; and they go on from the beginning of life until its close, always growling, in the hope

* Neal.

of making things better by scaring them into it with ugly noises.

The active grumbletonians are a very different race of mortals from the passives. The world is largely indebted to them for every comfort and convenience with which it abounds; and they laugh at the inquiry whether their exertions have conduced to the general happiness, holding it that happiness consists chiefly in exertion—to which the passives demur, as they look back with no little regret to the lazy days of pastoral life, when Chaldean shepherds lounged upon the grass. The actives are very much inclined to believe that whatever is, is wrong; but then they have as an offset, the comfortable conviction that they are able to set it right—an opinion which fire cannot melt out of them. These restless fellows are in a vast majority; and hence it is that the surface of this earthly sphere is such a scene of activity; hence it is that for so many thousand years, the greater part of each generation has been unceasingly employed in labour and bustle; rushing from place to place; hammering, sawing, and driving; hewing down and piling up mountains; and unappalled, meeting disease and death, both by sea and land.

The passive grumbletonian is useless to himself

and to others: the active grumbletonian is just the reverse. In general, he combines individual advancement with public prosperity; but there are exceptions even in that class—men, who try to take so much care of the world that they forget themselves, and, of course, fail in their intent.

Such a man is Fydget Fyxington, an amelioration-of-the-human-race-by-starting-from-first-principles-philosopher. Fydget's abstract principle, particularly in matters of government and of morals, is doubtless a sound rule; but he looks so much at the beginning that he rarely arrives at the end, and when he advances at all, he marches backward, his face being directed towards the starting place instead of the goal. By this means he may perhaps plough a straight furrow, but instead of curving round obstructions, he is very apt to be thrown down by them.

* * * * *

Winter ruled the hour when Fydget Fyxington was last observed to be in circulation—winter, when men wear their hands in their pockets and seldom straighten their backs—a season however, which, though sharp and biting in its temper, has redeeming traits. There is something peculiarly exhilarating in the sight of new-fallen snow. The storm

which brings it is not without a charm. The graceful eddying of the drifts sported with by the wind, and the silent gliding of the feathery flakes, as one by one they settle upon the earth like fairy creatures dropping to repose, have a soothing influence not easily described, though doubtless felt by all. But when the clouds, having performed their office, roll away, and the brightness of the morning sun beams upon an expanse of sparkling unsullied whiteness; when all that is common-place, coarse, and unpleasant in aspect, is veiled for the time, and made to wear a fresh and dazzling garb, new animation is felt by the spirit. The young grow riotous with joy, and their merry voices ring like bells through the clear and bracing air; while the remembrance of earlier days gives a youthful impulse to the aged heart.

But to all this there is a sad reverse. The resolution of these enchantments into their original elements by means of a thaw, is a necessary, but, it must be confessed, a very doleful process, fruitful in gloom, rheum, inflammations, and fevers—a process which gives additional pangs to the melancholic, and causes valour's self to droop like unstarched muslin.

Such a time was it when Fydget was extant—a

sloppy time in January. The city, it is true, was clothed in snow, rusty and forlorn in aspect, and weeping, as if in sorrow that its original purity had become soiled, stained, and spotted by contact with the world. Its whiteness had in a measure disappeared, by the pressure of human footsteps; wheels and runners had almost incorporated it with the common earth; and, where these had failed in effectually doing the work, remorseless distributers of ashes, coal dust, and potato peelings, had lent their aid to give uniformity to the dingy hue. But the snow, "weeping its spirit from its eyes," and its body too, was fast escaping from these multiplied oppressions and contumelies. Large and heavy drops splashed from the eaves; sluggish streams rolled lazily from the alleys, and the gutters and crossings formed vast shallow lakes, variegated by glaciers and ice islands. They who roamed abroad at this unpropitious time, could be heard approaching by the damp sucking sound which emanated from their boots, as they alternately pumped in and pumped out the water in their progress, and it was thus that our hero travelled, having no caoutchouc health-preservers to shield his pedals from unwholesome contact.

The shades of evening were beginning to thicken,

when Fydget stopped shiveringly and looked through the glass door of a fashionable hotel—the blazing fire and the numerous lights, by the force of contrast, made an outside seat still more uncomfortable.

The gong pealed out that tea was ready, and the lodgers rushed from the stoves to comfort themselves with that exhilarating fluid.

"There they go on first principles," said Fydget Fyxington with a sigh.

"Cla' de kitchen da'," said one of those ultra-aristocratic members of society, a negro waiter, as he bustled past the contemplative philosopher and entered the hotel; "you ought to be gwang home to suppa', ole soul, if you got some—yaugh—waugh!"

"Suppa', you nigga'!" contemptuously responded Fydget, as the door closed, "I wish I was gwang home to suppa', but suppers are a sort of thing I remember a good deal oftener than I see. Every thing is wrong—such a wandering from first principles!—there must be enough in this world for us all, or we wouldn't be here; but things is fixed so badly that I s'pose some greedy rascal gets my share of suppa' and other such elegant luxuries. It's just the way of the world; there's plenty of shares of

every thing, but somehow or other there are folks that lay their fingers on two or three shares, and sometimes more, according as they get a chance, and the real owners, like me, may go whistle. They've fixed it so that if you go back to first principles and try to bone what belongs to you, they pack you right off to jail, 'cause you can't prove property. Empty stummicks and old clothes ain't good evidence in court.

"What the deuse is to become of me! Something must—and I wish it would be quick and hurra about it. My clothes are getting to be too much of the summer-house order for the winter fashions. People will soon see too much of me—not that I care much about looks myself, but boys is boys, and all boys is sassy. Since the weather's been chilly, when I turn the corner to go up town, I feel as if the house had too many windows and doors, and I'm almost blow'd out of my coat and pants. The fact is, I don't get enough to eat to serve for ballast."

After a melancholy pause, Fydget, seeing the coast tolerably clear, walked in to warm himself at the fire in the bar-room, near which he stood with great composure, at the same time emptying several glasses of comfortable compounds which

had been left partly filled by the lodgers when they hurried to their tea. Lighting a cigar which he found half smoked upon the ledge of the stove, he seated himself and puffed away much at his ease.

The inmates of the hotel began to return to the room, glancing suspiciously at Fydget's tattered integuments, and drawing their chairs away from him as they sat down near the stove. Fydget looked unconscious, emitting volumes of smoke, and knocking off the ashes with a nonchalant and scientific air.

"Bad weather," said Brown.

"I've noticed that the weather is frequently bad in winter, especially about the middle of it, and at both ends," added Green. "I keep a memorandum book on the subject, and can't be mistaken."

"It's raining now," said Griffinhoff, "what's the use of that when it's so wet under foot already?"

"It very frequently rains at the close of a thaw, and it's beneficial to the umbrella makers," responded Green.

"Nothin's fixed no how," said Fydget with great energy—for he was tired of listening.

Brown, Green, Griffinhoff, and the rest started and stared.

"Nothin's fixed no how," continued Fydget rejoicing in the fact of having hearers; "our granddads must a been lazy rascals. Why didn't they roof over the side walks, and not leave everything for us to do? I ain't got no numbrell, and besides that, when it comes down as if raining was no name for it, as it always does when I'm cotch'd out, numbrells is no great shakes if you've got one with you, and no shakes at all if it's at home."

"Who's the indevidjual?" inquired Cameo Calliper, Esq., looking at Fydget through a pair of lorgnettes.

Fydget returned the glance by making an opera glass with each fist, and then continued his remarks; "It's a pity we ain't got feathers, so's to grow our own jacket and trousers, and do up the tailorin' business, and make our own feather beds. It would be a great savin'—every man his own clothes, and every man his own feather bed. Now I've got a suggestion about that—first principles bring us to the skin—fortify that, and the matter's done. How would it do to bile a big kittle full of tar, tallow, beeswax and injen rubber, with considerable wool, and dab the whole family once

a week? The young 'uns might be soused in it every Saturday night, and the nigger might fix the elderly folks with a whitewash brush. Then there wouldn't be no bother a washing your clothes or yourself, which last is an invention of the doctor to make people sick, because it lets in the cold in winter and the heat in summer, when natur' says shut up the porouses and keep 'em out. Besides, when the new invention was tore at the knees or wore at the elbows, just tell the nigger to put on the kittle and give you a dab, and you're patched slick—and so that whole mobs of people mightn't stick together like figs, a little sperrits of turpentine or litharage might be added to make 'em dry like a house-a-fire."

"If that fellow don't go away, I'll hurt him," said Griffinhoff *sotto voce*.

"Where's a waiter?" inquired Cameo Calliper edging off in alarm.

"He's crazy," said Green, "I was at the hospital once, and there was a man in the place who—"

"'Twould be nice for sojers," added Fyxington, as he threw away his stump, and very deliberately reached over and helped himself to a fresh cigar, from a number which Mr. Green had just brought

from the bar and held in his hand—"I'll trouble you for a little of your fire," continued he, taking the cigar from the mouth of Mr. Green, and after obtaining a light, again placing the borrowed Habana within the lips of that worthy individual, who sat stupified at the audacity of the supposed maniac. Fydget gave the conventional grin of thanks peculiar to such occasions, and with a graceful wave of his hand, resumed the thread of his lecture, "'Twould be nice for sojers. Stand 'em all of a row, and whitewash 'em blue or red, according to pattern, as if they were a fence. The gin'rals might look on to see if it was done according to Gunter; the cap'ins might flourish the brush, and the corpulars carry the bucket. Dandies could fix themselves all sorts of streaked and all sorts of colours. When the parterials is cheap and the making don't cost nothing, that's what I call economy, and coming as near as possible to first principles. It's a better way, too, of keeping out the rain, than my t'other plan of flogging people when they're young, to make their hides hard and waterproof. A good licking is a sound first principle for juveniles, but they've got a prejudice agin it."

"Waiter!" cried Cameo Calliper.

"Sa!"

"Remove the incumbent—expose him to the atmosphere!"

"If you hadn't said that, I'd wopped him," observed Griffinhoff.

"Accordin' to first principles, I've as good a right to be here as anybody," remarked Fydget, indignantly.

"Cut you' stick, 'cumbent—take you'sef off, trash!" said the waiter, keeping at a respectful distance.

"Don't come near me, Sip," growled Fydget, doubling his fist—"don't come near me, or I'll develope a first principle and 'lucidate a simple idea for you—I'll give you a touch of natur' without no gloves on—but I'll not stay, though I've a clear right to do it, unless you are able—yes, sassy able! —to put me out. If there is anything I scorns it's prejudice, and this room's so full of it and smoke together that I won't stay. Your cigar, Sir," added Fydget, tossing the stump to Mr. Green and retiring slowly.

"That fellow's brazen enough to collect militia fines," said Brown, "and so thin and bony, that if

pasted over with white paper, and rigged athwart ships, he'd make a pretty good sign for an oyster cellar."

The rest of the company laughed nervously, as if not perfectly sure that Fydget was out of hearing.

* * * * * *

"The world's full of it—nothin' but prejudice. I'm always served the same way, and though I've so much to do planning the world's good, I can't attend to my own business, it not only won't support me, but it treats me with despise and unbecoming freedery. Now, I was used sinful about my universal language, which everybody can understand, which makes no noise, and which don't convolve no wear and tear of the tongue. It's the patent anti-fatigue-anti-consumption omnibus linguister, to be done by winking and blinking, and cocking your eye, the way the cat-fishes make Fourth of July orations. I was going to have it introduced in Congress, to save the expense of anchovies and more porter; but t'other day I tried it on a feller in the street; I danced right up to him, and began canœuvering my daylights to ask him what o'clock it was, and I'm blow'd if he didn't swear I was crazy, up fist and stop debate, by putting it to

me right atween the eyes, so that I've been pretty well bung'd up about the peepers ever since, by a feller too who couldn't understand a simple idea. That was worse than the kick a feller gave me in market, because 'cording to first principles I put a bullowney sassinger into my pocket, and didn't pay for it. The 'riginal law, which you may see in children, says when you ain't got no money, the next best thing is to grab and run. I did grab and run, but he grabb'd me, and I had to trot back agin, which always hurts my feelin's and stops the march of mind. He wouldn't hear me 'lucidate the simple idea, and the way he hauled out the sassinger, and lent me the loan of his foot, was werry sewere. It was unsatisfactory and discombobberative, and made me wish I could find out the hurtin' principle and have it 'radicated."

Carriages were driving up to the door of a house brilliantly illuminated, in one of the fashionable streets, and the music which pealed from within intimated that the merry dance was on foot.

"I'm goin' in," said Fydget—"I'm not afeard—if we go on first principles we ain't afeard of nothin', and since they've monopolized my sheer of fun, they can't do less than give me a shinplaster to go away. My jacket's so wet with the rain, if I don't

get dry I'll be sewed up and have *hic jacket* wrote atop of me, which means defuncted of toggery not imprevious to water. In I go."

In accordance with this design, he watched his opportunity and slipped quietly into the gay mansion. Helping himself liberally to refreshments left in the hall, he looked in upon the dancers.

"Who-o-ip!" shouted Fydget Fyxington, forgetting himself in the excitement of the scene—"Who-o-ip!" added he, as he danced forward with prodigious vigour and activity, flourishing the eatables with which his hands were crammed, as if they were a pair of cymbals—"Whurro-o-o! plank it down—that's your sort!—make yourselves merry, gals and boys—it's all accordin' to first principles—whoo-o-o-ya—whoop!—it takes us!"

Direful was the screaming at this formidable apparition—the fiddles ceased—the waltzers dropped their panting burdens, and the black band looked pale and aghast.

"Who-o-o-p! go ahead!—come it strong!" continued Fydget.

But he was again doomed to suffer an ejectment.

"Hustle him out!"

"Give us a 'shinplaster' then — them's my terms."

It would not do — he was compelled to retire shinplasterless; but it rained so heavily that, nothing daunted, he marched up the alley-way, re-entered the house through the garden, and gliding noiselessly into the cellar, turned a large barrel over which he found there, and getting into it, went fast asleep "on first principles."

The company had departed—the servants were assembled in the kitchen preparatory to retiring for the night, when an unearthly noise proceeding from the barrel aforesaid struck upon their astonished ears. It was Fydget snoring, and his hearers, screaming, fled.

Rallying, however, at the top of the stairs, they procured the aid of Mr. Lynx, who watched over the nocturnal destinies of an unfinished building in the vicinity, and who, having frequently boasted of his valour, felt it to be a point of honour to act bravely on this occasion. The sounds continued, and the "investigating committee," with Mr. Lynx as chairman, advanced slowly and with many pauses.

Lynx at last hurriedly thrust his club into the

barrel, and started back to wait the result of the experiment.

"Ouch!" ejaculated a voice from the interior, the word being one not to be found in the dictionaries, but which, in common parlance, means that a sensation too acute to be agreeable has been excited.

"Hey!—hello!—come out of that," said Lynx, as soon as his nerves had recovered tranquillity. "You are in a bad box whoever you are."

"Augh!" was the response, "no, I ain't—I'm in a barrel."

"No matter," added Lynx, authoritatively; "getting into another man's barrel unbeknownst to him in the night-time, is burglary."

"That," said Fydget, putting out his head like a terrapin, at which the women shrieked and retreated, and Lynx made a demonstration with his club—"that's because you ain't up to first principles—keep your stick out of my ribs—I've a plan, so there won't be no burglary, which is this—no man have no more than he can use, and all other men mind their own business. Then, this 'ere barrel would be mine while I'm in it, and you'd be asleep—that's the idea."

"It's a logo-fogie!" exclaimed Lynx with horror —"a right down logo-fogie!"

"Ah!" screamed the servants—"a logo-fogie! —how did it get out?—will it bite?—can't you get a gun?"

"Don't be fools— a logo-fogie is a sort of a man that don't think as I do—wicked critters all such sort of people are," said Lynx. "My lad, I'm pretty clear you're a logo-fogie—you talk as if your respect for me and other venerable institutions was tantamount to very little. You're a leveller I see, and wouldn't mind knocking me down flat as a pancake, if so be you could run away and get out of this scrape—you're a 'grarium, and would cut across the lot like a streak of lightning if you had a chance."

"Mr. Lynx," said the lady of the house from the head of the stairs—she had heard from one of the affrighted maids that a "logo-fogie" had been "captivated," and that it could talk "just like a human"—"Mr. Lynx, don't have anything to say to him. Take him out, and hand him over to the police. I'll see that you are recompensed for your trouble."

"Come out, then—you're a bad chap—you

wouldn't mind voting against our side at the next election."

"We don't want elections, I tell you," said Fydget, coolly, as he walked up stairs—"I've a plan for doing without elections, and police-officers, and laws—every man mind his own business, and support me while I oversee him. I can fix it."

Having now arrived at the street, Mr. Lynx held him by the collar, and looked about for a representative of justice to relieve him of his prize.

"Though I feel as if I was your pa, yet you must be tried for snoozling in a barrel. Besides, you've no respect for functionaries, and you sort of want to cut a piece out of the common veal by your logo-fogieism in wishing to 'bolish laws, and policers, and watchmen, when my brother's one, and helps to govern the nation when the President, the Mayor, and the rest of the day-watch has turned in, or are at a tea-party. You'll get into prison."

"We don't want prisons."

"Yes we do though—what's to become of functionaries if there ain't any prisons?"

This was rather a puzzling question. Fyxington paused, and finally said:

"Why, I've a plan."

"What is it, then—is it logo-fogie?"

"Yes, it upsets existing institutions," roared Fyxington, tripping up Mr. Lynx, and making his escape—the only one of his plans that ever answered the purpose.

XXIII.

DOING A SHERIFF.

A GEORGIA SKETCH.

MANY persons in the county of Hall, State of Georgia, recollect a queer old customer who used to visit the county site regularly on "General Muster" days and Court Week. His name was Joseph Johnson, but he was universally known as Uncle Josey. The old man, like many others of that and the present day, loved his dram, and was apt, when he got among "the boys" in town, to take more than he could conveniently carry. His inseparable companion on all such occasions was a black pony, who rejoiced in the name of "General Jackson," and whose diminutiveness and sagacity were alike remarkable.

One day, while court was in session in the little village of Gainesville, the attention of the Judge and bar was attracted by a rather unusual noise at the door. Looking towards that aperture, "his honour" discovered the aforesaid pony and rider deliberately entering the Hall of Justice. This, owing to the fact that the floor of the court house was nearly on a level with the ground, was not difficult.

"Mr. Sheriff," said the Judge, "see who is creating such a disturbance of this court."

"It's only Uncle Josey and Gin'rel Jackson, Judge," said the intruder, looking up with a drunken leer, "Jest me an' the Gin'rel come to see how you an' the boys is gettin' along."

"Well, Mr. Sheriff," said the Judge, totally regardless of the interest manifested in his own and the lawyers' behalf, by Uncle Josey, "you will please collect a fine of ten dollars from Uncle Josey and the General, for contempt of court."

"Look-a-here, Judge, old feller," continued Uncle Josey, as he stroked the "Gin'ral's" mane, "you don't mean to say it, now do yer? This child hain't had that much money in a coon's age, and as for the Gin'ral here, I know he don't deal in no kind of quine, which he hain't done, 'cept fodder and corn, for these many years."

"Very well, then, Mr. Sheriff," continued his honour, "in default of the payment of the fine, you will convey the body of Joseph Johnson to the county jail, there to be detained for the space of twenty-four hours."

"Now, Judge, you ain't in right down good yearnest, is you?—Uncle Josey hain't never been put into that there boardin' house, yet, which he don't want to be, neither," appealed the old man, who was apparently too drunk to know whether it was a joke or not.

"The sheriff will do his duty, immediately," was the Judge's stern reply, who began to tire of the old man's drunken insolence. Accordingly, Uncle Josey and the "Gin'ral" were marched off towards the county prison, which stood in a retired part of the village. Arriving at the door, the prisoner was commanded by the sheriff to "light."

"Look-a-here, Jess, horse-fly, you ain't a gwine to put yer old Uncle Josey in there, is yer?"

"'Bliged to do it, Uncle Josey," replied the sheriff, "ef I don't, the old man (the judge) will give me *goss* when I go back. I hate it powerful, but I must do it."

"But, Jess, couldn't you manage to let the old man git away? Thar ain't nobody here to

see you. Now do, Jess, you know how I *fit* for you, in that last run you had 'long er Jim Smith, what like to a beat you for sheriff, which he would a done it, if it hadn't been for yer Uncle Josey's influence."

"I know that, Uncle Josey, but thar ain't no chance. My oath is very pinted against allowin' anybody to escape. So you must go in, cos thar ain't no other chance."

"I tell you what it is, Jess, I'm afeared to go in thar. Looks too dark and dismal."

"Thar ain't nothing in thar to hurt you, Uncle Josey, which thar hain't been for nigh about six months."

"Yes, thar is, Jess, you can't fool me that a-way. I know thar is somethin' in thar to ketch the old man."

"No thar ain't, I pledge you my honour thar ain't."

"Well, Jess, if thar ain't, you jest go in and see, and show Uncle Josey that you ain't afeared."

"Certainly, I ain't afeared to go in."

Saying which the sheriff opened the door, leaving the key in the lock. "Now, Uncle Josey, what did I tell you? I know'd thar wan't nothin' in thar."

"May be thar ain't where you are standin', but jest le's see you go up into that dark place, in the corner."

"Well, Uncle Josey," said the unsuspecting sheriff, "I'll satisfy you thar ain't nothin' thar either," and he walked towards the "dark corner." As he did so, the old man dexterously closed the door and locked it.

"Hello! thar," yelled the frightened officer, "none o' yer tricks, Uncle Josey; this is carryin' the joke a cussed sight too fur."

"Joke! I ain't a jokin', Jess; never was more in yearnest in my life. Thar ain't nothin' in thar to hurt you though, that's one consolation. Jest hold on a little while, and I'll send some of the boys down to let you out."

And before the "sucked in" sheriff had recovered from his astonishment, the pony and his master were out of hearing.

Uncle Josey, who was not as drunk as he appeared, stopped at the grocery, took a drink, again mounted the Gin'ral, and called the keeper of the grocery to him—at the same time drawing the key of the jail from his pocket.

"Here, Jeems, take this here key, and ef the old man or any them boys up thar at the Court-House

inquires after Jess Runion, the sheriff, jest you give 'em this key and my compliments, and tell 'em Jess is safe. Ketch 'em takin' in old Uncle Josey, will yer? Git up, Gin'ral, these boys here won't do to trust; so we'll go into the country, whar people's honest if they *is* poor."

The sheriff, after an hour's imprisonment, was released, and severely reprimanded by the judge, but the sentence of Uncle Josey was never executed, as he never troubled the Court again, and the judge thought it useless to imprison him with any hope of its effecting the slightest reform.

XXIV.

THE MUSCADINE STORY.

It was a bland September morning, in a year that need not be specified, that the Captain, standing in view of the west door of the Court-house at Dadeville, perceived the sheriff emerging therefrom, a bundle of papers in hand, and looking as if he desired to execute some sort of a *capias*.

The Captain instantly bethought him, that there was an indictment pending against himself for gaming, and began to collect his energies for an emergency. The sheriff hailed him at the same moment, and requested him to "hold on."

"Stop, Ellis—*right thar* in your tracks, as the bullet said to the buck," Suggs responded; "them dockyments look *venermous*!"

"No use," said the officer—"sooner or later you must be taken; dog-face Billy Towns is here, and he'll go your security."

"Keep off, I tell you, Ellis; I ain't safe to-day—the old woman's coffee was cold this mornin', and it fretted me. If you've got anything agin me, keep it 'till Court—I'll be thar—'waive all formalities,' you know!"

"I will waive nothing," replied the sheriff, advancing: "I'll put you whar I can find you when wanted."

Suggs drew an old revolving pistol, whereupon the sheriff paused.

"The blood," shouted the Captain, "of the High Sheriff of Tallapoosy County be upon his own head. If he crowds on to me, I give fair warnin' I'll discharge this *revolten'* pistol seven several and distinct times, as nigh into the curl of his forehead, as the natur' of the case will admit."

For a moment the sheriff was intimidated; but recollecting that Captain Suggs had a religious dread of carrying *loaded* fire-arms about his person, although he often sported them uncharged for effect, he briskly resumed his stride, and the Captain, hurling the "revolter" at his head, at once fell into a "killing pace" towards the rack where stood his pony, "Button."

The sheriff's horse, by chance, was tied at the same rack, but a wag of a fellow, catching Suggs's

idea, unhitched the pony, and threw the bridle over its neck, and held it ready to be mounted; so that the Captain was in his saddle, and his nag at half speed, ere the sheriff put his foot in the stirrup.

Here they go! clattering down the street "like an armed troop!" Now the blanket-coat of the invincible Captain disappears round Luke Davenport's corner! The sheriff is hard after him! "Go it, Ellis!" "Go it Suggs!" "Whoop! whoop! hurrah!" Again the skirts of the blanket-coat become visible, on the rise by M'Cleudon's, whisking about the pony's rump! "Lay whip, Sheriff; your bay's lazy!" The old bay gains on Button, however. But now they turn down the long hill towards Johnson's Mill creek. Right sturdily the pony bears his master on, but the bay is overhauling him fast! They near the creek! He has him! no!—the horse runs against the pony—falls himself—projects his rider into the thicket on the right—and knocks the pony and its rider into the stream.

It happened, that, by the concussion or some other cause, the girth of Captain Suggs's saddle was broken; so that neither himself nor his saddle was precisely on Button's back when they reached the water. It was no time to stop for trifles, however; so leaving the saddle in the creek, the Captain

bestrode the bare back of his panting animal, and made the best of his way onward. He knew that the Sheriff would still follow, and he therefore turned from the road at right angles, skirted the creek swamp for a mile, and then took a direction by which he would reach the road again, four or five miles from the scene of his recent submersion.

The dripping Captain and his reeking steed cut a dolorous figure, as they traversed the woods. It was rather late in the season to make the hydropathic treatment they had so lately undergone agreeable; and the departure of the Captain from Dadeville had been too unexpected and hurried to allow the slightest opportunity for filling his quart tickler.

"Wonder," said he to himself, "if I won't take a fit afore I git any more—or else have a whole carryvan of blue-nose monkeys and forky-tail snakes after me — and so get a sight of the menajerie 'thout payin' the fust red cent. Git up, you lazy Injun!"

With the last words, Simon vigorously drove his heels against Button's sides, and in a half hour had regained the road.

Scarcely had Captain Suggs trotted a hundred

yards, when the sound of horses' feet behind him caused him to look back. It was the Sheriff.

"Hello! Sheriff! stop!" said Suggs.

The Sheriff drew up his horse.

"I've got a proposition to make to you; you can go home with me, and *thar* I can give bond."

"Very well," said the Sheriff.

"But hands off till we git thar, and you ride fifty steps ahead of me, for fear of accidents—that's the proposition."

"Agreed!"

"Not so fast," said Suggs, "thar's a condition."

"What's that?"

"Have you got any liquor along?"

The Sheriff pulled out a black bottle by way of reply.

"Now," said Captain Suggs, "do you put the bottle on that stump thar, and ride out from the road fifty yards, and when I git it, take your position in front."

These manœuvres were performed with much accuracy, and the parties being ready, and the Captain one drink ahead:

"For—rard, march!" said Suggs.

In this order, the Sheriff and Captain wended their way, until they arrived at the crossing of Eagle Creek, a stream having a miry swamp on each side. As his pony was drinking, an idea popped into the Captain's head which was immediately acted upon. He suddenly turned his pony's head down stream, and in half a minute was out of sight.

"Come, Button," said he, "let's hunt wild-cats a spell!"

The Sheriff, almost as soon as he missed our hero, heard him splashing down the creek. He plunged into the swamp, with the intention of heading him, but the mud was so soft that after floundering about a little while, he gave it up, and returned to the road, cursing as much for the loss of his black bottle, as of the Captain.

"Hello, Ellis!" shouted Suggs.

"Hello, yourself!"

"Don't you try that swamp no more; it'll mire butterflies, in spots!"

"No danger!" was the response.

"And don't you try to follow me, on that tall horse, down the run of this creek; if you do,

you'll have both eyes hangin' on bamboo briers in goin' a hundred yards—besides, *moccasin time ain't over yet*, and thar's lots of 'em about these old logs!"

"Take care of yourself, you old thief!" said the irritated officer.

"Once again, Ellis, old fellow!" said Suggs, coaxingly.

"What do you want?"

"Nothin', only I'm much obleeged to you for this black bottle—*here's luck!*—you can charge the price in the next bill of costs you git agin me."

The discomfited Sheriff could stand this jeering from the Captain no longer, so he put spurs to his horse and left.

"Now," murmured Suggs, "let me depart in peace, for thar's no chance to ketch up with me now!—Cuss the hole—and yonder's a horsin' log!

"Well, the wicked flee when no man pursueth; wonder what they'd do if they had that black rascal, Martin Ellis, after 'em, on that infernal long-legged bay? Durn the luck! thar's that new saddle that I borrowed from the Mississippi feller—

which he'll never come back for it—*that's* lost in the mill creek!—jist as good as ten dollars out of my pocket. Well, it's no use 'sputin' with providence—hit *will* purvide!'

"The Grand Jurors of the State of Alabama," he continued, soliloquizing in the verbiage of an indictment; "elected, sworn, and charged—*darned rascals all, with Jim Bulger at the head!*—to inquire for the body of Tallapoosa County—*durn their hearts! it's* MY *body they're after!*—upon their oaths present—*confound them!*—that Simon Suggs—*hem! that's me, but they might've put the 'Captain' to it, though!*—late of said County—*just as if I warn't one of the fust settlers, which I was here, afore they had a sign of a Court House!*

"Well, it's no use thinkin' about the lyin' thing; I'll have to go Hadenskeldt, at Court, to get me out'n the suck. Now, *he's* a quar one, ain't he? Never got him to do any law job for me yet but what I had to pay him—drot the feller. Anybody would think 'twas as hard to git money from me as 'tis for a man to draw a headless tenpenny nail out'n an oak post with his teeth—but that little black-headed lawyer makes a *ten*, or a *twenty*, come every pop!

"Wonder how fur 'tis down to the bend? This creek makes into the river about a mile below it, they say. Never mind, thar's a few drinks of the *ipsydinxy* left, and the menajjerie won't open to-day. I judge if my old woman knowed *whar* I was goin', and *who* I was goin' to see, she'd make the yeath shake. But she don't know; it's a prinsippel that Providence has put into the bosom of a man—leastways all sensible men—to run on and talk a heap afore their wives, to make 'em believe *they're turnin' wrong side out before 'em* and yet never tell 'em the fust word of truth. It's a wise thing in providence, too. Wonder, if I'll ketch that rascal Jim Sparks jewlarkin' round Betsy, down at old Bob's!"

On the morning after the occurrence of the adventure we have related, Captain Suggs sat in a long trim-built Indian canoe, which was moored to the north bank of the Tallapoosa river. Near him was Miss Betsy Cockerell. She sat facing the Captain, on a board laid across the gunwales of the boat. Miss Betsy was a bouncing girl, plump, firm, and saucy, with a mischievous rolling eye, and a sharp word for ever at her tongue's end. She seemed to be coquetting with the paddle she held in her hand,

and occasionally would strike it on the water, so as to besprinkle Captain Suggs, much to his annoyance.

"Oh, Captin, you do persuade me to promise you so hard. And Jim Sparks says you're married; and if you ain't you mought 'a been, twenty years ago; you're old enough."—(splash!)

"I say, mind how you throw your water! Jim Sparks is a triflin' dog—if I have got a wife, Betsy, she is goin' fast."

"Goin' *whar?*" asked Betsy, striking the water again.

"Confound your paddle! can't you keep it still? Providence is goin' to take her home, Betsy—she's dwindled away to a shadder, with that cough and one thing and another. She ain't long for this world," he added, mournfully; "and if you, Betsy, will only make up your mind—the devil take that paddle!—you'll turn over the boat, and throw me in the river!—make up your mind to step into her shoes, it looks like it would sort o' reconcile me to lose her"—and here a tear leaked out of each corner of the Captain's eyes.

"Oh, Captin," said Betsy, half shutting one eye, and looking quizzical; "thar's so many good-

lookin' young fellers about, I hate to give 'em up. I *like* you, Captin, but thar's Bill Edwards, and Jet Wallis, and Jim Sparks, and"—

"'Good lookin'!' and 'Jet Wallis' and 'Jim Sparks!' Why Jet's mouth is no better than a hole made in the fore part of his head with a claw-hammer—and as for Jim Sparks, he's got the face of a terrier dog."

"Do you count *yourself* good-lookin'?" asked Betsy, with great *naïveté*.

"Gal!" replied Suggs, with dignity, "did you ever see me in my uniform? with my silver oppolots on my shoulder? and my red sash round my waist? and the sword that Governor Bagby give me, with the gold scabbard a hangin' by my side?"

Just at this moment a step was heard, and before the Captain and Betsy had recovered from the shock of intrusion, Sheriff Ellis stepped into the boat, and asserted that Suggs "was his prisoner!"

"Treed at last!" said the Captain; "but it's no use frettin'; the ways of Providence is mysterious. But whar did you cross, Ellis?"

"Oh, I knew you'd be about the old lick log 'a

fishin' with Betsy. I'll turn the kunnoo loose, and Bets will take us across. I crossed at Hambrick's ferry, left my horse on t'other side, and come down on you, like a mink on a settin' hen. Come! come! it's time we were off to Dadeville."

"Providence is agin me," sighed the Captain; "I'm pulled up with a short jerk, in the middle of my kurreer. Well, but," he continued, musing, "'spose a feller tries on his own hook—no harm in takin' *all* the chances—I ain't in jail, *yet!*"

A few yards below the boat landing, there grew out of the bank, an immense water-oak, projecting over the river, at an angle of about forty-five. A huge muscadine vine enwrapped the oak in every part, its branches and tendrils covering it like network. The grapes were now ripe, and hung over the river

> "In bacchanal profusion,—
> Purple and gushing."

Betsy allowed the canoe to drop down slowly, just outside of where the tips of the lower branches of the tree dallied with the rippling water. The fruit attracted the Sheriff's eye and appetite, and

reaching out an arm he laid hold of a branch, and began to "pluck and eat."

"Drot the grapes!" said Suggs, angrily; "let's go on!"

"Keep cool," said the Sheriff, "I'll fill my pockets first."

"Be in a hurry, then, and if you *will* gather the sour things, reach up and pull down them big bunches, up thar," pointing to some fine clusters higher than the Sheriff could reach, as he stood up in the boat, "pull the vines down to you?"

The Sheriff tried, but the vines resisted his utmost strength; so crying "steady!" he pulled himself up clear of the boat, and began to try to establish a footing among the foliage.

At this moment Captain Suggs made no remark orally, but his eye said to Betsy, as plainly as eye could talk, "hit her a lick back, my gal!"

Silently the paddle went into the water, Betsy leaning back, with lips compressed, and in a second the canoe shot ten feet out from the tree, and the Sheriff was left dangling among the vines!

"Stop your senseless jokes!" roared the officer.

"Keep cool, old Tap-my-shoulder! thar's jist the

smallest grain of a joke in this here, that ever you seed. It's the coldest sort of airnest."

"What shall I do? How shall I get out of this?" asked Ellis, piteously.

"Let all go and drop in the water, and swim out," was the reply.

"I can't swim a lick—how deep is it?"

Suggs seemed to ruminate, and then replied:

"From—say—fifteen—yes, *at least*, fifteen—to —about twenty-five foot. Ugly place!"

"Gracious goodness!" said poor Ellis, "you certainly won't leave me here to drown—my strength is failing already."

"If I don't," said the Captain, most emphatically, "I wish I may be cotched and hanged where you are," and saying a word to Betsy, they shot rapidly across the river.

Kissing his companion as he stepped out of the boat, Suggs sought Button, who was tied to a thicket near by, and mounting, pursued his homeward way.

"*Never despar*," he said to himself, as he jogged along, "never despar! Honesty, a bright watch-out, a hand o' cards in your fingers and one in your lap, with a little grain of help from Providence, will

always fetch a man through! Never despar! I've been hunted and tracked and dogged like a cussed wolf, but the Lord has purvided, and my wust *inimy has tuck a tree!* Git up, Button, you old, flop-eared Injun!"

XXV.

POLLY PEABLOSSOM'S WEDDING.*

"My stars! that parson is *powerful* slow a-coming! I reckon he wa'n't so tedious gitting to his own wedding as he is coming here," said one of the bridesmaids of Miss Polly Peablossom, as she bit her lips, and peeped into a small looking-glass for the twentieth time.

"He preaches enough about the shortness of a lifetime," remarked another pouting Miss, "and how we ought to improve our opportunities, not to be creeping along like a snail, when a whole wedding-party is waiting for him, and the waffles

* By the Hon. J. B. Lamar.

are getting cold, and the chickens burning to a crisp."

"Have patience, girls, maybe the man's lost his spurs and can't get along any faster," was the consolatory appeal of an arch-looking damsel, as she finished the last of a bunch of grapes.

"Or perhaps his old fox-eared horse has jumped out of the pasture, and the old gentleman has to take it a-foot," surmised the fourth bridesmaid.

The bride used industrious efforts to appear patient and rather indifferent amid the general restiveness of her aids, and would occasionally affect extreme merriment; but her shrewd attendants charged her with being fidgety, and rather more uneasy than she wanted folks to believe.

"Hello, Floyd!" shouted old Captain Peablossom out of doors to his copperas-trowsered son, who was entertaining the young beaux of the neighbourhood with feats of agility in jumping with weights—"Floyd, throw down them rocks, and put the bridle on old Snip, and ride down the road and see if you can't see Parson Gympsey, and tell him hurry along, we are all waiting for him. He must think weddings are like his meetings, that can be put off to the 'Sunday after the fourth Saturday in next

month,' after the crowd's all gathered and ready to hear the preaching. If you don't meet him, go *clean* to his house. I 'spect he's heard that Bushy Creek Ned's here with his fiddle, and taken a scare."

As the night was wearing on, and no parson had come yet to unite the destinies of George Washington Hodgkins and "the amiable and accomplished" Miss Polly Peablossom, the former individual intimated to his *intended* the propriety of passing off the time by having a dance.

Polly asked her ma, and her ma, after arguing that it was not the fashion in her *time*, in North Car'lina, to dance before the *ceremony*, at last consented.

The artist from Bushy Creek was called in, and after much tuning and adjusting of the screws, he struck up "Money Musk;" and away went the country-dance, Polly Peablossom at the head, with Thomas Jefferson Hodgkins as her partner, and George Washington Hodgkins next, with Polly's sister, Luvisa, for his partner. Polly danced to every gentleman, and Thomas Jefferson danced to every lady; then up and down in the middle and hands all round. Next came George Washington

and his partner, who underwent the same process; "and so on through the whole," as Daboll's Arithmetic says.

The yard was lit up by three or four large light-wood fires, which gave a picturesque appearance to the groups outside. On one side of the house was Daniel Newnan Peablossom and a bevy of youngsters, who either could not or did not desire to get into the dance—probably the former—and who amused themselves by jumping and wrestling. On the other side a group of matrons sat under the trees, in chairs, and discoursed of the mysteries of making butter, curing chickens of the pip and children of the croup, besides lamenting the misfortunes of some neighbour, or the indiscretion of some neighbour's daughter, who had run away and married a circus-rider. A few pensive couples, eschewing the "giddy dance," promenaded the yard and admired the moon, or "wondered if all *them* little stars were worlds like this." Perhaps they may have sighed sentimentally at the folly of the musquitoes and bugs which were attracted round the fires to get their pretty little wings scorched and lose their precious lives; or they may have talked of "true love," and plighted their vows, for aught we know.

Old Captain Peablossom and his pipe, during the while, were the centre of a circle in front of the house who had gathered around the old man's arm-chair to listen to his "twice-told tales" of "hair-breadth 'scapes," of "the battles and sieges he had passed;" for you must know the captain was no "summer soldier and sunshine patriot;" he had burned gunpowder in defence of his beloved country.

At the especial request of Squire Tompkins, the captain narrated the perilous adventures of Newnan's little band among the Seminoles. How "bold Newnan" and his men lived on alligator flesh and parched corn, and marched barefooted through saw-palmetto; how they met Bowlegs and his warriors near Paine's Prairie, and what fighting was there. The amusing incident of Bill Cone and the terrapin shell, raised shouts of laughter among the young brood, who had flocked around to hear of the wars. Bill, (the "Camden Bard," peace to his ashes), as the captain familiarly called him, was sitting one day against the logs of the breastwork, drinking soup out of a terrapin shell, when a random shot from the enemy broke the shell and spilt his soup, whereupon he raised his head over the breastwork and sung out: "Oh, you villain! you

couldn't do that again if you tried forty times." Then the captain, after repeated importunities, laid down his pipe, cleared his throat, and sung:

"We marched on to our next station,
The Ingens on before did hide,
They shot and killed Bold Newnan's nigger,
And two *other* white men by his side."

The remainder of the epic we have forgotten.

After calling out for a *chunk* of fire, and relighting his pipe, he dashed at once over into Alabama, in General Floyd's army, and fought the battles of Calebee and Otassee over again in detail. The artillery from Baldwin county blazed away, and made the little boys aforesaid think they could hear thunder almost, and the rifles from Putnam made their patriotic young spirits long to revenge that gallant corps. And the squire was astonished at the narrow escape his friend had of falling into the hands of Weatherford and his savages, when he was miraculously rescued by Timpoochie Barnard, the Utchee chief.

At this stage of affairs, Floyd (*not the general,* but the ambassador) rode up, with a mysterious look on his countenance. The dancers left off in

the middle of a set, and assembled around the messenger, to hear the news of the parson. The old ladies crowded up, too, and the captain and the squire were eager to hear. But Floyd felt the importance of his situation, and was in no hurry to divest himself of the momentary dignity.

"Well, as I rode on down to Boggy Gut, I saw—"

"Who cares what the devil you saw?" exclaimed the impatient captain; "tell us if the parson is coming, first, and you may take all night to tell the balance, if you like, afterwards."

"I saw—" continued Floyd pertinaciously.

"Well, my dear, what did you see?" asked Mrs. Peablossom.

"I saw that some one had *tooken* away some of the rails on the cross way, or they had washed away or somehow—"

"Did anybody ever hear the like?" said the captain.

"And so I got down," continued Floyd, "and hunted some more and fixed over the boggy place."

Here Polly laid her hand on his arm and requested, with a beseeching look, to know if the parson was on the way.

"I'll tell you all about it presently, Polly. And when I got to the run of the creek, then—"

"Oh, the devil!" ejaculated Captain Peablossom, "stalled again!"

"Be still, honey, let the child tell it his own way —he always would have his way, you know, since we had to humour him so when he had the measles," interposed the old lady.

Daniel Newnan Peablossom, at this juncture, facetiously lay down on the ground, with the root of an old oak for his pillow, and called out yawningly to his pa, to "wake him when brother Floyd had crossed over the *run* of the creek and arrived safely at the parson's." This caused loud laughter.

Floyd simply noticed it by observing to his brother, "Yes, you think you're *mighty smart* before all these folks!" and resumed his tedious route to Parson Gympsey's, with as little prospect of reaching the end of his story as ever.

Mrs. Peablossom tried to coax him to "*jist*" say if the parson was coming or not. Polly begged him, and all the bridesmaids implored. But Floyd "went on his way rejoicing."

"When I came to the Piney-flat," he continued, "old Snip *seed* something white over in the bay-gall, and shy'd *clean* out o' the road, and—" where

he would have stopped, would be hard to say, if the impatient captain had not interfered.

That gentleman, with a peculiar glint of the eye, remarked, "Well, there's one way I can bring him to a showing," as he took a large horn from between the logs, and rung a "wood-note wild" that set a pack of hounds to yelping. A few more notes as loud as those that issued from "Roland's horn at Roncesvalles" was sufficient invitation to every hound, foist, and "cut of low degree," that followed the guests, to join in the chorus. The captain was a man of good lungs, and "the way he *did* blow was the way," as Squire Tomkins afterwards very happily described it; and as there were in the canine choir some thirty voices of every key, the music may be imagined better than described. Miss Tabitha Tidwell, the first bridesmaid, put her hands to her ears and cried out:

"My stars! we shall all git *blow'd* away!"

The desired effect of abbreviating the messenger's story was produced, as that prolix personage in copperas pants, was seen to take Polly aside, and whisper something in her ear.

"Oh, Floyd, you are joking; you oughtn't to serve me so. An't you joking, *bud?*" asked Polly, with a look that seemed to beg he would say yes.

"It's true as preaching," he replied, "the cake's all dough!"

Polly whispered something to her mother, who threw up her hands, and exclaimed, "Oh, my!" and then whispered the secret to some other lady, and away it went. Such whispering and throwing up of hands and eyes, is rarely seen at a quaker meeting. Consternation was in every face. Poor Polly was a very personification of "patience on a monument, smiling green and yellow melancholy."

The captain, discovering that something was the matter, drove off the dogs, and inquired what had happened to cause such confusion. "What the devil's the matter now?" he said. "You all look as *down in the mouth* as we did on the *Santaffee* (St. Fe), when the quartermaster said the provisions had all give out. What's the matter—won't somebody tell me? Old 'oman, has the dogs got into the kitchen and eat up all the supper, or what else has come to pass? out with it!"

"Ah, old man, bad news!" said the wife with a sigh.

"Well, what is it? you are *all* getting as bad as Floyd, *terryfying* a fellow to death."

"Parson Gympsey was digging a new horse

trough and cut his leg to the bone with the foot-adze, and can't come—Oh, dear!"

"I wish he had taken a fancy to 'a done it a week ago, so we *mout* 'a got another parson, or, as long as no other time would suit but to-day, I wish he had cut his derned eternal head off!"

"Oh, my! husband," exclaimed Mrs. Peablossom. Bushy Creek Ned, standing in the piazza with his fiddle, struck up the old tune of

> "We'll dance all night, 'till broad daylight,
> And go home with the *gals* in the morning."

Ned's hint caused a movement towards the dancing room, among the young people, when the captain, as if waking from a revery, exclaimed in a loud voice: "Oh, the devil! what are we all thinking of? why here's Squire Tompkins, *he can perform the ceremony.* If a man can't marry folks, what's the use of being squire at all?"

Manna did not come in better time to the children of Israel in the wilderness, than did this discovery of the worthy captain to the company assembled. It was as vivifying as a shower of rain on corn that is about to shoot and tassel, especially to G. W. Hodgkins and his lady-love.

Squire Tompkins was a newly elected magistrate, and somewhat diffident of his abilities in this untried department. He expressed a hint of the sort, which the captain only noticed with the exclamation, "hoot toot!"

Mrs. Peablossom insinuated to her husband, that in her *day* the "*quality*," or better sort of people in North Ca'lina, had a prejudice *agin* being married by a magistrate; to which the old gentleman replied: "None of your nonsense, old lady, none of your Duplin county aristocracy about here, now. The better sort of people, I think you say! Now, you know North Ca'lina ain't the best State in the Union, nohow, and Duplin's the poorest county in the State. Better sort of people, is it? *Quality*, eh! Who the devil's better than we are? An't we honest? An't we raised our children decent, and learned them how to read, write and cipher? An't I *fou't* under Newnan and Floyd for the country? Why, darn it! we are the *very best* sort of people. Stuff! nonsense! The wedding shall go on; Polly shall have a husband." Mrs. P.'s eyes lit up—her cheek flashed, as she heard "the old North State" spoken of so disparagingly; but she was a woman of good sense,

and reserved the castigation for a future curtain lecture.

Things were soon arranged for the wedding; and as the old wooden clock on the mantel-piece struck one, the bridal party were duly arranged on the floor, and the crowd gathered round, eager to observe every twinkle of the bridegroom's eye, and every blush of the blooming bride.

The bridesmaids and their male attendants were arranged in couples, as in a cotillion, to form a hollow square, in the centre of which were the squire and betrothing parties. Each of the attendants bore a candle; Miss Tabitha held hers in a long brass candlestick, which had belonged to Polly's grandmother, in shape and length somewhat resembling "Cleopatra's needle;" Miss Luvisa bore a flat tin one; the third attendant bore such an article as is usually suspended on a nail against the wall, and the fourth had a curiously devised something cut out of wood with a pocket-knife. For want of a further supply of candlesticks, the male attendants held naked candles in their hands. Polly was dressed in white, and wore a bay flower with its green leaves in her hair, and the whisper went round: "Now *don't* she look pretty?"

George Washington Hodgkins rejoiced in a white satin stock, and a vest and pantaloons of orange colour; the vest was straight-collared, like a continental officer's in the revolution, and had eagle buttons on it. They were a fine-looking couple.

When everything was ready, a pause ensued, and all eyes were turned on the Squire, who seemed to be undergoing a mental agony, such as Fourth of July orators feel when they forget their speeches, or a boy at an exhibition, when he has to be prompted from behind the scenes. The truth was, Squire Tompkins was a man of forms, but had always taken them from form-books, and never trusted his memory. On this occasion he had no "Georgia Justice," or any other book from which to read the marriage-ceremony, and was at a loss how to proceed. He thought over everything he had ever learned "by heart," even to

> "Thirty days hath the month of September,
> The same may be said of June, April, November;"

but all in vain; he could recollect nothing that suited such an occasion. A suppressed titter all over the room admonished him that he must proceed

with something, and in the agony of desperation, he began:

"Know all men by these presents, that I—" here he paused and looked up to the ceiling, while an audible voice in a corner of the room was heard to say:

"He's drawing up a *deed* to a tract of land," and they all laughed.

"In the name of God, Amen!"—he began a second time, only to hear another voice in a loud whisper say:

"He's making his *will* now. I thought he couldn't live long, he looks so powerful bad."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord—"

was the next essay, when some erudite gentleman remarked:

"He is not dead, but sleepeth."

"O yes! O yes!" continued the Squire.

One voice replied: "Oh no! oh no! don't let's." Another whispered, "No ball!" Some person out of doors, sung out, "Come into court!" and the laughter was general.

The bridesmaids spilt the tallow from their candles all over the floor, in the vain attempt to

look serious. One of them had a red mark on her lip for a month afterwards, where she had bit it. The bridegroom put his hands in his pockets, and took them out again; the bride looked as if she would faint—and so did the Squire!

But the Squire was an indefatigable man, and kept trying. His next effort was:

"To all and singular, the sher—"

"Let's run! he's going to *level* on us," said two or three at once.

Here a gleam of light flashed across the face of Squire Tompkins. That dignitary looked around all at once, with as much satisfaction as Archimedes could have felt, when he discovered the method of ascertaining the specific gravity of bodies. In a grave and dignified manner, he said:

"Mr. Hodgkins, hold up your right hand."

George Washington obeyed, and held up his hand.

"Miss Polly, hold up yours."

Polly, in her confusion held up the left hand.

"The other hand, Miss Peablossom."

And the Squire proceeded, in a loud and composed manner, to qualify them:

"You and each of you do solemnly swear, before the present company, that you will perform toward

each other, all and singular the functions of a husband or wife—as the case may be—to the best of your knowledge and ability, so help you God!"

"Good as wheat!" said Captain Peablossom. "Polly, my gal, come and kiss your old father; I never felt so happy since the day I was discharged from the army, and set out homewards to see your mother."

XXVI.

THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

WHENCE comes the gibberish which is almost invariably used by mothers and nurses, to infants? Take for example the following, which will answer the twofold purpose of illustrating my idea, and of exhibiting one of the peculiarities of the age.

A few days ago, I called to spend an hour in the afternoon with Mr. Slang, whose wife is the mother of a child about eight months old.

While I was there, the child in the nurse's arms, in an adjoining room began to cry.

"You Rose," said Mrs. Slang, addressing a female slave, "quiet that child!"

Rose walked it, and sang to it; but it did not hush.

"You Rose! if you do not quiet that child, I lay I make you."

"I is tried, ma'am," said Rose, "an' he wouldn't get hushed."

(*Child cries louder.*)

"Fetch him here to me, you good for nothing hussy you. What's the matter with him?" reaching out her arms to receive him.

"I dun know ma'am."

"Nhei—nhun—nho—nha'am!" (*mocking and grinning at Rose.*)

As Rose delivered the child, she gave visible signs of dodging, just as the child left her arms; and, that she might not be disappointed, Mrs. Slang gave her a box: in which there seemed to be no anger mixed at all; and which Rose received *as a matter of course*, without even changing countenance under it.

"Da den!" said Mrs. Slang, "come elong e muddy (mother.) Did nassy Yosey, (Rose,) pague muddy thweety chilluns? (children)" pressing the child to her bosom, and rocking it backward and forward tenderly. "Muddins will whippy ole nassy Yosey. Ah! you old uggy Yosey," (*knocking at Rose playfully.*) "Da den; muddy did wippy bad Yosey."

(*Child continues crying.*)

"Why what upon earth ails the child? Rose, you've hurt this child, somehow or other!"

"No m'm, 'cla' I didn't—I was jist sitt'n down dar in the rock'n chair long side o' Miss Nancy's bureau, an' want doin' nothin' 't all to him, jis playin' wid him, and he jis begin to cry heself, when nobody wa'n't doin' nothin' 't all to him, and nobody wa'nt in dar nuther sept jis me and him, and I was—"

"Nhing—nhing—nhing—and I expect you hit his head against the bureau."

"Let Muddy see where ole bad Yosey knocky heady 'gin de bureaus. Muddy *will* see," taking off the child's cap, and finding nothing.

(*Child cries on.*)

"Muddy's baby was hongry. Dat was what ails muddy's darling, th'sweety ones. Was cho hongry, an' nobody would givy litty darling any sings 't all for eaty?" (*loosing her frock bosom.*) "No, nobody would gim t'shweety ones any sings fo' eat 't all"—(*offers the breast to the child, who rejects it, rolls over, kicks, and screams worse than ever.*)

"Hush, you little brat! I believe it's nothing in the world but crossness. Hush! (*shaking it,*) hush, I tell you!"

(*Child cries to the ne plus ultra.*)

"Why surely a pin must stick the child. Yes, was e bad pin did ticky chilluns. Let muddy see where de uggy pin did ticky dear prettous creter," (*examining.*) "Why no, it isn't a pin. Why what can be the matter with the child! It must have the cholic surely. Rose, go bring me the paragoric off the mantle-piece. Yes, muddy's baby did hab e tolic. Dat was what did ail muddy's prettous darly baby."

(*Pressing it to her bosom and rocking it. Child cries on.*)

Rose brought the paragoric, handed it, dodged, and got her expectations realized as before.

"Now go bring me the sugar, and some water."

Rose brought them, and delivered both without the customary reward; for at that instant, the child being laid perfectly still on the lap, hushed.

The paragoric was administered, and the child received it with only a whimper now and then. As soon as it received the medicine, the mother raised it up and it began to cry.

"Why Lord help my soul, what's the matter with the child! what have you done to him, you little hussy?"

(*Rising and walking towards Rose.*)

"'Cla', Missis, I eint done nothin' 't all—was jis sittin' down da by Miss Nancy's bu—"

"You lie, you slut!" (*hitting her a passing slap,*) "I know you've hurt him. Hush, my baby," (*singing the Coquet,*) "don't you cry, your sweetheart will come by'm'by; da, de dum dum dum day, da de dum diddle dum dum day."

(*Child cries on.*)

"Lord help my soul and body, what can be the matter with my baby!" (*tears coming in her own eyes.*) "Something's the matter with it; I know it is," (*laying the child on her lap, and feeling its arms, to see whether it flinched at the touch of any particular part.*) But the child cried less while she was feeling it than before.

"Yes, dat was it; wanted litty arms yubb'd. Mud will yub its sweet little arms."

(*Child begins again.*)

"What upon earth can make my baby cry so!" rising and walking to the window.

(*Stops at the window, and the child hushes.*)

"Yes, dat was it: did want to look out 'e windys. See the pretty chickens. O-o-o-h! Look, at, the beauty, rooster! Yonder's old aunt Betty! See old aunt Betty, pickin' up chips. Yes, ole aunt Betty, pickin' up chip fo' bake bicky (biscuit) fo'

good chilluns. Good aunt Betty fo' make bicky fo' sweet baby's supper!"

(*Child begins again.*)

"Hoo-o-o! see de windy!" (*knocking on the window. Child screams.*)

"You Rose! what have you done to this child? You little hussy you, if you don't tell me how you hurt him, I'll whip you as long as I can find you!"

"Missis I 'cla' I never done noth'n' 't all to him. I was jis sett'n' down da by Miss Nancy's bu—"

"If you say '*Miss Nancy's bureau*' to me again, I'll stuff Miss Nancy's bureau down your throat, you little lying slut! I'm just as sure you've hurt him, as if I'd seen you. How did you hurt him?"

Here Rose was reduced to a *non plus*; for, upon the peril of having a bureau stuffed down her throat, she dare not repeat the oft-told tale, and she knew no other. She therefore stood mute.

"Julia," said Mr. Slang, "bring the child to me, and let me see if I can discover the cause of his crying."

Mr. Slang took the child, and commenced a careful examination of it. He removed its cap, and

beginning at the crown of its head, he extended the search slowly and cautiously downward, accompanying the eye with the touch of the finger. He had not proceeded far in this way, before he discovered in the right ear of the child, a small feather, the cause, of course, of all its wailing. The cause removed, the child soon changed its tears to smiles, greatly to the delight of all, and to none more than to Rose.

XXVII.

PELEG W. PONDER;

OR, THE POLITICIAN WITHOUT A SIDE.*

It is a curious thing—an unpleasant thing—a very embarrassing sort of thing—but the truth must be told—if not at all times, at least sometimes; and truth now compels the declaration, that Peleg W. Ponder, whose character is here pourtrayed, let him travel in any way, cannot arrive at a conclusion. He never had one of his own. He scarcely knows a conclusion, even if he should chance to see one belonging to other people. And, as for reaching a result, he would never be able to

* By J. C. Neal.

do it, if he could stretch like a giraffe. Results are beyond his compass. And his misfortune is, perhaps, hereditary, his mother's name having been Mrs. Perplexity Ponder, whose earthly career came to an end while she was in dubitation as to which of the various physicians of the place should be called in. If there had been only one doctor in the town, Perplexity Ponder might have been saved. But there were many—and what could Perplexity Ponder do in such a case?

Ponder's father was run over by a waggon, as he stood debating with himself, in the middle of the road, whether he should escape forward or retreat backward. There were two methods of extrication, and between them both old Ponder became a victim. How then could their worthy son, Peleg, be expected to arrive at a conclusion? He never does.

Yet, for one's general comfort and particular happiness, there does not appear to be any faculty more desirable than the power of "making up the mind." Right or wrong, it saves a deal of wear and tear; and it prevents an infinite variety of trouble. Commend us to the individual who closes upon propositions like a nutcracker—whose promptness of will has a sledge-hammer way with it, and

hits nails continually on the head. Genius may be brilliant—talent commanding; but what is genius, or what is talent, if it lack that which we may call the clinching faculty—if it hesitates, veers, and flutters—suffers opportunity to pass, and stumbles at occasion? To reason well is much, no doubt; but reason loses the race, if it sits in meditation on the fence when competiton rushes by.

Under the best of circumstances, something must be left to hazard. There is a chance in all things. No man can so calculate odds in the affairs of life as to insure a certainty. The screws and linchpins necessary to our purpose have not the inflexibility of a fate; yet they must be trusted at some degree of risk. Our candle may be put out by a puff of wind on the stairs, let it be sheltered ever so carefully. Betsy is a good cook, yet beefsteaks have been productive of strangulation. Does it then follow from this, that we are never to go to bed, except in the dark, and to abstain from breaking our fast until dinner is announced?

One may pause and reflect too much. There must be action, conclusion, result, or we are a failure, to all intents and purposes—a self-confessed failure—defunct from the beginning. And such was the case with Peleg W. Ponder, who never

arrived at a conclusion, or contrived to reach a result. Peleg is always "stumped"—he "don't know what to think"—he "can't tell what to say"—an unfinished gentleman, with a mind like a dusty garret, full, as it were, of ricketty furniture, yet nothing serviceable—broken-backed chairs—three-legged tables—pitchers without a handle—cracked decanters and fractured looking-glasses—that museum of mutilations, in which housewifery rejoices, under the vague, but never-realized hope, that these things may eventually "come in play." Peleg's opinions lie about the workshop of his brain, in every stage of progress but the last—chips, sticks, and sawdust, enough but no article ready to send home.

Should you meet Peleg in the street, with "Good morning, Peleg—how do you find yourself to-day?"

"Well—I don't know exactly—I'm pretty—no, not very—pray, how do you do, yourself?"

Now, if a man does not know exactly, or nearly, how he is, after being up for several hours, and having had abundant time to investigate the circumstances of his case, it is useless to propound questions of opinion to such an individual. It is useless to attempt it with Peleg. "How do you do,"

puzzles him—he is fearful of being too rash, and of making a reply which might not be fully justified by after-reflection. His head may be about to ache, and he has other suspicious feelings.

"People are always asking me how I do, and more than half the time I can't tell—there's a good many different sorts of ways of feeling betwixt and between 'Very sick, I thank you,' and 'Half dead, I'm obliged to you;' and people won't stop to hear you explain the matter. They want to know right smack, when you don't know right smack yourself. Sometimes you feel things a-coming, and just after, you feel things a-going. And nobody's exactly prime all the while. I ain't, anyhow—I'm kinder so just now, and I'm sorter t'other way just after.—Then, some people tell you that you look very well, when you don't feel very well—how then?"

At table, Peleg is not exactly sure what he will take; and sits looking slowly up and down the board, deliberating what he would like, until the rest of the company have finished their repast, there being often nothing left which suits Peleg's hesitating appetite.

Peleg has never married—not that he is averse to the connubial state—on the contrary, he has a large,

share of the susceptibilities, and is always partially in love. But female beauty is so various. At one time, Peleg is inclined to believe that perfection lies in queenly dignity—the majesty of an empress fills his dreams; and he looks down with disdain upon little people. He calls them "squabs," in derogation. But anon, in a more domestic mood, he thinks of fireside happiness and quiet bliss, declining from the epic poetry of loveliness, to the household wife, who might be disposed to bring him his slippers, and to darn the hole in his elbow. When in the tragic vein, he fancies a brunette; and when the sunshine is on his soul, blue eyes are at a premium. Should woman possess the lightness of a sylph, or should her charms be of the more solid architecture? Ought her countenance to beam in smiles, or will habitual pensiveness be the more interesting? Is sparkling brilliancy to be preferred to gentle sweetness?

"If there wasn't so many of them, I shouldn't be so bothered," said Peleg; "or, if they all looked alike, a man couldn't help himself. But yesterday, I wanted this one—to day, I want that one; and to-morrow, I'll want t'other one; and how can I tell, if I should get this, or that, or t'other, that it wouldn't soon be somebody else that I really

wanted? That's the difficulty. It always happens so with me. When the lady's most courted, and thinks I ought to speak out, then I begin to be skeered, for fear I've made a mistake, and have been thinking I loved her, when I didn't. May be it's not the right one—may be she won't suit—may be I might do better—may be I had better not venture at all. I wish there wasn't so many 'may-bes' about everything, especially in such affairs. I've got at least a dozen unfinished courtships on hand already."

But all this happened a long time ago; and Peleg has gradually lost sight of his fancy for making an addition to his household. Not that he has concluded, even yet, to remain a bachelor. He would be alarmed at the bare mention of such an idea. He could not consent to be shelved in that decisive manner. But he has subsided from active "looking around" in pursuit of his object, into that calm, irresponsible submissiveness, characteristic of the somewhat elderly bachelor, which waits until she may chance to present herself spontaneously, and "come along" of her own accord. "Some day—some day," says Peleg; "it will happen some day or other. What's the use of being in a hurry?"

Peleg W. Ponder's great object is now ambition.

His personal affairs are somewhat embarrassed by his lack of enterprize; and he hankers greatly for an office. But which side to join? Ay, there's the rub! Who will purvey the loaf and fish? For whom shall Peleg shout?

Behold him, as he puzzles over the returns of the state elections, labouring in vain to satisfy his mind as to the result in the presidential contest. Stupefied by figures—perplexed by contradictory statements—bothered by the general hurrah; what can Peleg do?

"Who's going to win? That's all I want to know," exclaims the vexed Peleg; "I don't want to waste my time a blowing out for the wrong person, and never get a thank'e. What's the use of that? There's Simpkins—says I, Simpkins, says I, which is the party that can't be beat? And Simpkins turns up his nose and tells me every fool knows that—it's his side—so I hurrah for Simpkins's side as hard as I can. But then comes Timpkins—Timpkins's side is t'other side from Simpkins's side, and Timpkins offers to bet me three levies that his side is the side that can't be beat. Hurrah! says I, for Timpkins's side!—and then I can't tell which side.

"As for the newspapers, that's worse still. They

not only crow all round, but they cipher it out so clear, that both sides must win, if there's any truth in the ciphering-book; which there isn't about election times. What's to be done? I've tried going to all the meetings—I've hurraed for everybody—I've been in all the processions, and I sit a little while every evening in all sorts of head-quarters. I've got one kind of documents in one pocket, and t'other kind of documents in t'other pocket; and as I go home at night, I sing one sort of song as loud as I can bawl half of the way, and try another sort of song the rest of the way, just to split the difference and show my impartiality. If I only had two votes—a couple of 'em—how nice it would be.

"But the best thing that can be done now, I guess, as my character is established both ways, is to turn in quietly till the row is all over. Nobody will miss me when they are so busy; and afterward, when we know all about it, just look for Peleg W. Ponder as he comes down the street, shaking people by the hand, and saying how we have used them up. I can't say so now, or I would—for I am not perfectly sure yet which is 'we,' or which is 'them.' Time enough when the election is over."

It will thus be seen that Ponder is a remarkable person. Peter Schlemihl lost his shadow, and became memorably unhappy in consequence; but what was his misfortune when compared with that of the man who has no side? What are shadows if weighed against sides? And Peleg is almost afraid that he never will be able to get a side, so unlucky has he been heretofore. He begins to dread that both sides may be defeated; and then, let us ask, what is to become of him? Must he stand aside?

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